

POLITICAL



THINKERS



OF

MODERN INDIA

17 ABUL KALAM AZAD



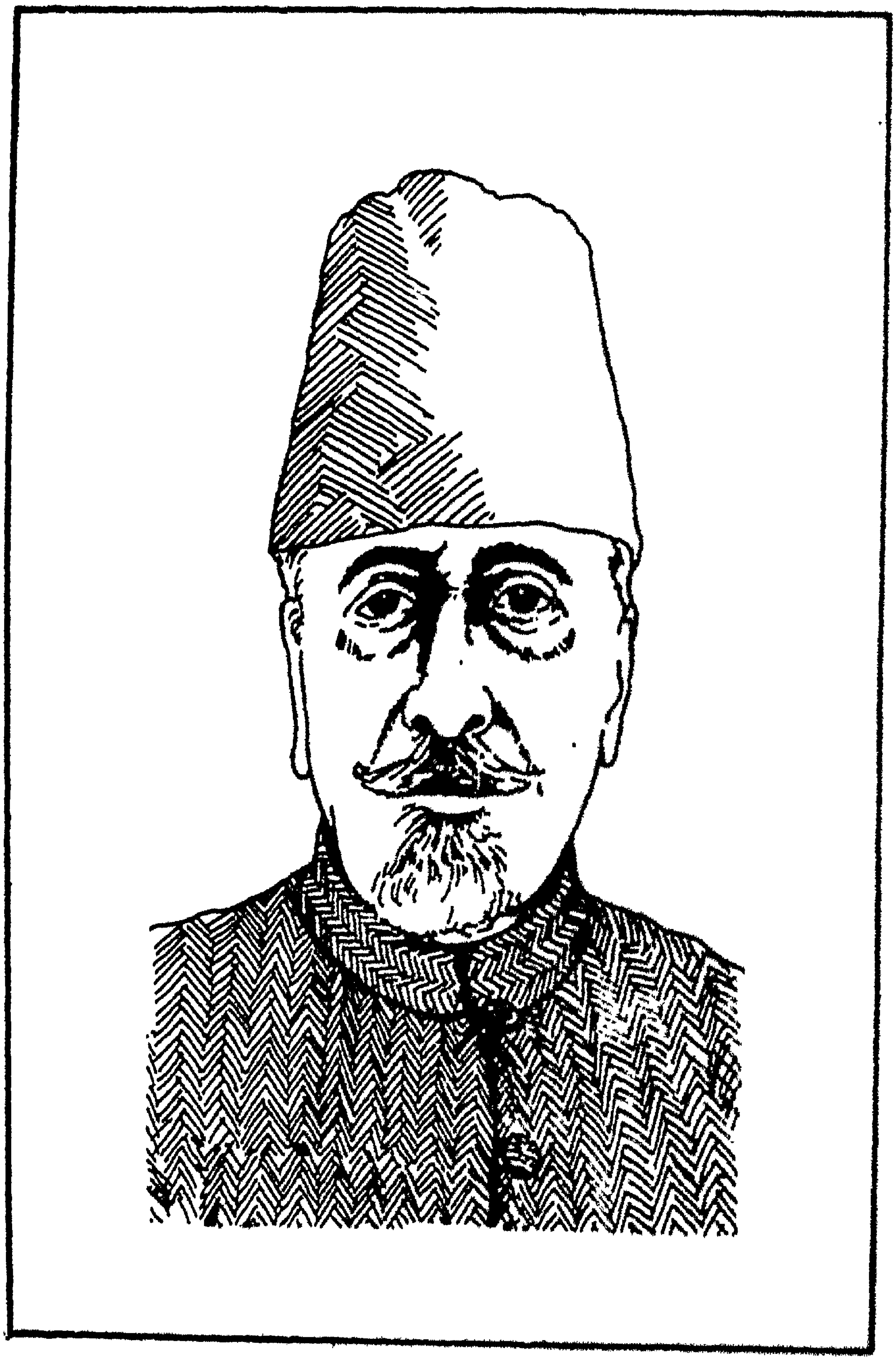
EDITED BY

VERINDER GROVER

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Volume Seventeen

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VOLUME SEVENTEEN
ABUL KALAM AZAD

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PREFACE

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born in Mecca in 1888 and named Muhiyuddin Ahmed. His father Maulana Khairuddin, who was a religious scholar and spiritual guide, went to Mecca at 25, settled there and won fame as a scholar after the publication of a ten-volume work in Egypt. In 1890, Maulana Khairuddin alongwith his family returned to India and settled in Calcutta.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a traditional education from his father and other teachers. He proved to be a child prodigy and finished his formal education by 16. Later under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's writings, he studied modern science, philosophy and literature, learnt English and acquired enough proficiency to be able to read books on history and philosophy. In 1908 he visited Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Turkey and France.

While in Calcutta, he joined a group of revolutionaries and under his influence their activities were extended to many important towns of North India and Bombay.

In 1906 he took up the editorship of *Vakil*, a bi-weekly published from Amritsar. Later he started an Urdu weekly *Al-Hilal* from Calcutta in June 1912, which achieved unprecedented popularity. In order to curb its anti-British tone, the Government of Bengal imposed many restrictions on its publication and finally after the outbreak of World War I, the *Al-Hilal* press was confiscated. In 1915, he started a new weekly *Al-Balagh* which was also banned in March 1916. Maulana Azad was externed from Bengal, Punjab, Delhi and Bombay and was interned in Ranchi (Bihar) till 31 December 1919.

Soon after his release, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad met Mahatma Gandhi on 18 January 1920 and plunged into the *Khilafat* and non-Co-operation Movement. After the collapse of the *Khilafat* movement, Maulana Azad devoted the rest of his

life to the Freedom Movement under the Indian National Congress and became one of the leading national figures.

Maulana Azad joined the Interim Government as Education Minister on 15 January, 1947 and continued to hold this portfolio after independence also till his death on 22 February 1958.

Maulana Azad was, in short, a scholar, a theologian, an orator, a freedom fighter and a far-sighted statesman.

This book is divided into two parts. Part I is a collection of selected speeches and writings of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad reflecting his views on different aspects of national and international affairs. Part II contains articles assessing the role of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as a political thinker, a scholar, and a statesman.

This book is a systematic piecing together of selected speeches delivered and articles contributed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad himself and other scholars and specialists to the various journals of national and international repute. My special thanks are due to *Modern Review*, *Education Quarterly*, *Indian Literature*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India*, *National Herald*, *The Tribune*, *Indian Express*, *Secular Democracy*, *Muslim India*, *Mainstream* and *Indo-Iranica* from which I have drawn freely. I express my deep sense of appreciation to all the contributors for their scholarly papers and gratitude to the various librarians and eminent scholars in the field who extended their co-operation to me.

New Delhi VERINDER GROVER

CHRONOLOGY

1831	Maulana Azad's father Khair-ud-Din born in Delhi.
1856	Family migrates to Mecca.
1866	Khair-ud-Din marries in a prominent family of Mecca.
1888	Birth of Maulana Azad in Mecca.
1898	Family migrates to India and settles in Calcutta.
1899	Azad's mother dies in Calcutta; Starts monthly *Narang-e-Khayal.*
1900	Editor *Alamsubha.*
1904	Attends Annual Conference of *Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam.*
1905	Goes abroad but returns from Iraq due to illness. Meets Maulana Shibli.
1906/7	Editor 'Vakil' resigns; Azad's marriage with Zuleikha Begum.
1908	Death of Azad's father Khair-ud-Din. Goes abroad for a trip to Iraq and other West-Asian countries. Returns in 1910.
1912	*Al-Hilal's* first issue comes out. Security forfeited and deposited again.
1914	*Al-Hilal's* security again forfeited. Asked to deposit Rs. 10,000. *Al-Hilal* stopped its publication.
1915	Founded *Dar-ul-Irshad.* Begins a new paper *Al-Balagh.*
1916	*Al-Balagh*, too, stopped. The Maulana ordered to leave Bengal. Interned in Ranchi.
1920	Allowed to leave Ranchi. Meets Gandhiji in Delhi. The Maulana takes part in Khilafat Action Committee. Presides over Khilafat Conference.
1921	The Maulana arrested and sent for trial under Section 17.
1922	Trial held in jail premises. The Maulana sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

1923 Released from Alipore Jail. Elected President Indian National Congress.

1929 Established an All-India Muslim Nationalist Party. Its first President was Maulana Azad.

1930 Maulana Azad was arrested in connection with Non-co-operation Movement .d sentenced for 6 months.

1931 Released from jail. Presided over the tenth session of *Jamait-ul Ulma-i-Hind* held at Karachi.

1932 Selected Chairman of Calcutta Corporation in place of Subhas Chandra Bose.

1937 The Maulana arrives in Lucknow to discuss matters relating to formation of ministry. The Maulana categorically informed a representative of 'Tej' that there was no question of taking a person from another party until he signs to adhere by rules and regulations of the Congress.

1939 Presided over Congress Working Committee in absence of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

1940 Elected President of Congress. Polled 1,811 votes against 181 by M.N. Roy. First meeting of the Congress Working Committee held under the Presidentship of Maulana Azad. Maulana Azad asked the Congress leaders from all over the country to be ready for the struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji.

1941 Maulana Azad arrested in Allahabad and sent to Naini Jail. Sentenced to imprisonment for one and a half years.

1942 Arrival of Cripps Mission. The Maulana nominated to represent Congress at the talks. Cripps' proposal rejected. Congress passes the Quit India Resolution under the Presidentship of Azad. The Maulana arrested and interned in Ahmadnagar Fort.

1943 Azad's wife Zuleikha Begum dies.

1944 Azad reads about Gandhiji's meeting with Jinnah and did not approve of this.

1945 Azad transferred to Bankura jail and released on 15th June. At the invitation of the Viceroy took part in the Simla Conference which ended in failure.

1946 Met the Cabinet Delegation and represented the Congress. Proposed the name of Jawaharlal Nehru for Congress Presidentship. Was nominated as a Minister in the

Interim Government.

1947 Was given the Portfolio of Education. Made a forceful speech after the attainment of independence. Declared that Muslim League had no place in New India.

1948 Congratulated the country over the breaking of the fast by Gandhiji. Justifies the police action in Hyderabad.

1950 Founded the India Council for Cultural Relations in Delhi. Urged the British Government to return the India Office Records. Paid a handsome tribute to Sardar Patel on his anniversary.

1951 Inaugurated the Sapru House. Elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. Introduced a bill in Parliament to allow Hindus and Muslims to become members of the courts of the Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University. Inaugurated the Visva Bharati as Shanti Niketan University.

1952 In the First General Elections Maulana Azad won from Rampur by 35,753 votes.

1954 Maulana Azad slipped in his house and broke his bone. Was advised rest in bed for six weeks. His addresses to UNESCO as well as Central Advisory Board for Education were read by Humayun Kabir.

1955 Maulana Azad undertook a tour of London via Karachi where the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mohd. Ali called on him. Azad declared that India Office Library did not belong to Britain and would have to be returned to India.

1956 Maulana Azad had high blood pressure and was advised complete rest. He had not been allowed to attend Parliament or office. The Maulana stood for election from Gurgaon and was elected with a majority of 95,667 votes.

1958 The first Conference of the All India Organisation for the Promotion of Urdu was held on February 15 on the grounds adjacent to Jama Masjid and Red Fort. On February 22, at 2.15 a.m. Maulana Azad passed away.

PART I

1

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

You will remember that when India became free it was increasingly recognised that we must establish closer cultural contacts with other countries of the world. It was also realised that the proper way of doing so would be to set up an organisation which could represent India to the world. One of its major functions would be to dispel misunderstandings and prejudices which had arisen against India in certain areas of the world. This was the more necessary as during the last two centuries India was not free to play her role on the stage of the modern world. During this period she was under the domination of the British Government. She therefore appeared to the world in the way in which the British chose to represent her. Naturally, this was done not for her own sake but in the way that suited British purposes. It was only after she became free that she could again appear before the world in her own true character.

In 1949 we took up this question, and in April 1950 the Indian Council for Cultural Relations was established. Its constitution made it clear that its aim was to establish cultural contacts with all foreign countries and its field of action extended to the entire world. It was however obvious that such large scale activities could not commence all at once. In order to make a

*At the General Assembly Meeting of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations on 14th February, 1958.

beginning and also to ensure that the initial efforts were not dissipated, we decided that we would divide the work of the Council into different regions. We started with the division for Middle East, Turkey and Egypt.

Some friends may ask why the work of the Council began with this particular division. It is a natural question but the reasons are also quite obvious. You will remember that India attained her freedom in conditions which led to the partition of the country and created an atmosphere of hatred and communalism in the air. Large number of Hindus and Sikhs were persecuted and killed in Pakistan and large countries of Muslims met a similar fate in India. There was a stream of refugees across the border. There could be no case for complaint if these facts were objectively stated to the world outside but I have to say with regret that the newly created State of Pakistan gave only one side of the story and started a propaganda campaign against India. One result of this was that an impression was created in Muslim countries that India was partitioned on a communal basis and India now meant a solely Hindu country. They came to believe that even if a few Muslims remained in India, they had no religious or civic freedom.

I will mention to you only one incident which shows how far misunderstanding of India in the Middle East had gone. In 1949, the Government of India appointed the late Syed Husain as India's first Ambassador to Egypt. At the airport, he told the Press that he was the Indian Ambassador to Egypt. The Egyptians had then become so prejudiced against India that they could not believe that a Muslim could be the Ambassador of India. They thought that there was some mistake and he must be the Pakistan Ambassador to Egypt. All the papers therefore reported that Syed Husain was the first Pakistan Ambassador to Egypt. Illustrated papers printed his photo with the same caption. When Syed Husain came to know this, he had to write to the Government of Egypt asking that they must remove the misunderstanding. The Government of Egypt accordingly published a press communique stating the facts. This one incident gives us a clear idea of how India had been misunderstood in these countries.

I am however glad to inform you that soon after the establishment of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, the situation dramatically changed. All these countries realised how baseless and false were their prejudice and misunderstanding. They also

realised that the Indian Government was not a Government of Hindus alone but a trully national Government of all Indians.

When this Division was first set up, the Council began to publish an Arabic Quarterly *Thaqafat-ul-Hind.* The articles published in this journal had an electric effect on the people of the Muslim word. They saw India in a new light. Papers in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Iran praised this journal and quoted or translated articles from it. Many famous writers and authors of these countries spoke highly of the journal and its contributions. Some articles were so popular that a society in Iraq published them as a book. In Iran also, Persian translations of these articles appeared in book form. Famous orientalists of England, France and Italy also translated some of the articles into their languages.

There is also a quarterly in English and Persian, *Indo-Iranies* which is published for the Council by the Iran Society of Calcutta.

The work of the Middle East Section had from the beginning included Egypt. Soon after African countries were also taken into its orbit and a separate Africa Section opened. You can measure the success of the Council in these fields from one simple fact. I have already told you how India had been mis-represented in these Muslim countries immediately after independence. Within two years of the establishment of the Council, the situation was completely changed. The same people who had formerly distrusted India now became India's warmst friends. Sudan is a fully Islamic country and since her independence, has looked to India for inspiration. When she wanted to organise her first elections, she sought the services of an Indian. She invited an Indian to help her to reorganise her secondary education. When she needed personnel for her judicial departments, it was again to India that she turned.

Similarly, Iraq, Syria, Sudan and Iran have been sending students for higher education to India. Formerly all such students went to Europe or America but today a number of them are studying in Indian institutions.

You are also aware that Egypt, Syria, Iran and Sudan have invited our Prime Minister to visit their countries. Their Presidents and Prime Ministers have also visited India and have spoken in warm terms about the friendly atmosphere that they found here. The cordiality of these relations was possible only because the old prejudices had been dispelled and India revealed to these countries

in her true light. The King of Saudi Arabia has expressed in eloquent terms his warm regard for the Government and the people of India and paid a tribute to the manner in which all communities live in friendship under the Republican Constitution of India. You will be glad to hear that in this transformation the Indian Council has played a notable part.

When the Divisions of the Middle East and Africa had been well organised and active for sometime, we took the next step in organising a Division for South East Asia. The countries of this region are not only our close neighbours but the people also have close relations with India. The majority are either Muslims or Buddhists and have many realisations with the people of our country. A quarterly entitled *Indo-Asian Culture* was started and has become popular with students of Buddhist History, Philosophy and Culture. Its articles on these subjects as well as on the Pali language have attracted attention both on these countries and also among scholarly circles in the Western world.

I find that the time has come to extend our activities still further. Naturally our first step will be to establish closer connections with Commonwealth countries. I have in mind the idea of setting up a Division for dealing with this field and when this has been established, we will also take up the question of establishing closer and more contacts with America and Europe.

You will find a detailed account of the activities of the Council in the Secretary's report. I will only very briefly mention some of the major items in this programme. The Council has three Professors of Sanskrit and Indology working in Turkey, Iran and Cambodia. There are also cultural lecturers working in the Caribean area. In addition, there have been programmes for the exchange of scholars, students and literary men with various foreign countries. Indians who have settled abroad have sought the help of the Council for providing facilities of teaching Hindi and Indian culture to their children. Lectures have been arranged by eminent Indian and foreign scholars and large number of books on India and mostly by Indian authors have been presented to libraries, universities and to other educational and cultural institutions in many countries of the world. A programme of translation of Indian classics into foreign languages is making good progress. I may make special mention of the work of Vadi'l Bostani who has translated the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

I would like to say a special word about the way in which the Council has been looking after the welfare of overseas students studying in India. I have already mentioned that many students from Middle Eastern countries are now coming to India for higher studies. We have also cultural scholars from other regions of the world. The Council looks after their general welfare and also arranges for special summer camps and seminars for them. Orientation courses are held at different centres which help overseas students in understanding the local customs and adjusting themselves to their new environment. The Council has also taken in hand the difficult problem of finding accommodation for overseas scholars and bringing them into touch with Indian families. It is proposed to set up International Hostels in the large metropolitan cities and a beginning has been made by acquiring premises for the purpose in Calcutta. This will begin to function before the next academic session and I hope similar International Hostels and Clubs will also soon be set up in Bombay and Delhi.

This brief account will give up an idea of the manysided activities of the Council. It can, however, function most effectively only if all its members take a constant and active interest in its activities. I hope every one of you will serve as a spokesman of the Council in your own area and set up formally or informally centres which will carry on the work of interpreting India to the world which the Council has set before itself.

Before I conclude, I would extend a special welcome to the representatives of the European and American countries who are attending this meeting for the first time. I would also like to welcome the representative of Pakistan who too is attending it for the first time. I hope this marks further strengthening of the ties of friendship between our two countries. We have been separated on political grounds, but we have been one people and our cultural life is such that it cannot be divided without loss to both. I hope our contacts with all these countries will continue to increase and the Council will play an increasing role in bringing our peoples closer to one another.

2

MUSLIMS MUST DECIDE TO ESCHEW COMMUNALISM IN POLITICS AND JOIN NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES BUT MAINTAIN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS TO SAFEGUARD RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

I have to say a few things to you. I am standing before you, thinking where to begin this story.

You know that during the last eight months, one after another, revolutionary events have taken place. Each event is cemented to the other like a link in a chain and we have to go back to the events of the last few years to complete the chain that we now see before us.

When the Chairman of the Reception Committee was addressing you, I was thinking of the approach I should adopt. The situation is such that if I forget the past links and catch hold of only one, the story shall remain incomplete but if we look at the events of the last ten years, it is inevitable that I would be reviving old controversies for a while, and with them the old bitterness. I will try that the past bitterness does not cast a shadow on the present debate. Yet the events are of such a

*Speech at the Muslim Convention, Lucknow, 1948.

nature that the debate shall lay many persons open to blame. But I wish to tell you that I have not come here to blame any Muslim. The era of vilification is gone. I shall not like for a minute to open my mouth to vilify you or any other friend.

Vilify ? Whom or how ? My brothers ? My friends ? Strike my head ? Strike against a wall ? Against which wall ? I have come here with a new mind and I will request all of you, my dear ones, my friends, brothers, sisters, to try and adopt a new thinking. We should forget the old bitterness and controversies. We must fulfil the demands of the present situation with clear and new thinking. Therefore, I will avoid raking up the past.

. . . The question is that in the circumstances that surround us, what should be our decision, what approach should we adopt. What can be the right path for the Muslims and for the country ? You know that when we faced this question, we had no answer. Our nails were shorn and we were left with none to unravel this knot; now even if we try to do so, we can find no new solution.

The solution that I can offer you is a very old solution, as far as I am concerned, which I have been placing before you for the last forty years. It is not new for me. There are thousands, even lakhs, of people in this country who shared that view with me and share it today. But there is no doubt that there is a large section of friends in the country who were opposed to it yesterday. I would like to draw their attention to this that even if yesterday they differe, there is no reason why today in the changed circumstances, they should maintain the same old view. They should look at the present and find the correct line of action.

I did not intend to take any step on my own or convene a conference. I felt that the problems are such that they should be given an opportunity to resolve themselves. I was not in a hurry to defend myself, but I found that from various corners of the country there was a demand that the Muslims should be guided in the present situation.

I shall not conceal it from you that among the friends who made this demand, many belonged to the Muslim League. I told them that I am prepared to be of any service that I can render but it would be better that representatives from various provinces gather and come to some decision. Last Ramadan, I thought of convening such a consultative meeting in Delhi after Id-ul-Fitr but the atmosphere in Delhi unfortunately was not proper. Time

passed; demand continued. Then I decided that it would not be right to delay it any further that it was my duty to place before the Muslims, what I and my colleagues considered right yesterday and consider right even today.

BURY COMMUNALISM ONCE FOR ALL

Looking at the present condition of the Muslims and the future of the country, nothing is needed more than that communalism, which has been inspired in the name of religion, should be buried for ever, once for all, as far as the political life of the country is concerned, the communalism not of one community, not of one party but the communalism of all. Every communal party has contributed to the horrors that have taken place after 15 August, 1947. There is no party which has emerged potless. There are blood-stains on the hands of the Muslims, of the Hindus, of the Sikhs. No one can tell me that the Muslim hands bear no stains and are clean and spotless.

Communalism has not entered by one door but by many doors. All the doors must be shut. If we desire that our country, whose freedom we were dreaming of for 70 years, is not destroyed, it is our duty to shut these doors. There is also no doubt that one big door which let communalism enter was opened by the Muslim League. I should not have named the Muslim League, as I have just said than I do not wish to name anyone or any party. But the events tell us that the Muslim League did open the door of communalism and the history of Muslim League during the last decade is a history of communalism. If that door is not shut now, without doubt much of the responsibility for resolving present problems shall remain on the Muslims.

What was right for us before 15 August, should be right for us at least today. If you do not think so, one cannot expect any good for the Muslims from you.

NOTHING OBJECTIONABLE IN CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION

As far as this Convention is concerned, you should decide without any hesitation that we shall not establish any Muslim organisation in the political field on communal foundations, nor

allow even the shadow of communalism to fall on any Muslim institution. For defending their religious rights, for safeguarding their religious interests, for promoting their cultural values if they wish to maintain such organisations, they may do so; there is nothing objectionable in that. Not only that but it is essential that there should be such an organisation which would safeguard religious, cultural and educational interests of the Muslims. This is an essential task. It must be taken up; it cannot be left unattended. But you must decide today that the organisations which are concerned with political objectives shall not be based on communalism, i.e., on being Muslim or Hindu or Sikh.

If you think otherwise, that is the end of the story. But if you think that communalism is poison for the country, you must take a clear-cut decision that as far as the Muslims are concerned, they do not wish that there would be a communal organisation under the skies of India !

This would mean that the Muslim League should be dissolved but . . . this decision does not mean that other organisations (e.g., Jamait-ul-Ulema) should continue to occupy the field of politics . . . No, you should decide that all communal political organisations should be dissolved in future : there should be no such organisations.

Still the question remains; what should the Muslims do ? The Muslims should join political organisations which are not communal, any organisation which has political objectives, which strives for your welfare but which does not discriminate among Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs or Christians but keeps its doors open to all citizens of India.

Someone may demand advice on the particular organisation Muslim should join. I cannot say anything new. In my view, the Indian National Congress is a progressive political organisation which Muslim can and may join. But I do not intend to advise that they should not join any other non-communal organisation. The main thinking is to eliminate communalism from the field of politics.

A practical question remains; whatever decision you take cannot be implemented by passing resolutions and by sitting at home. To improve the climate of the country, you must establish a temporary machinery to implement that decision. My advice is that you should establish a non-communal committee in order to

generate a new climate in the country.

These are three decisions that you must take at this Convention . . . Thus you would be rendering the biggest service of the time . . . to the country and to the community.

3

REFORM IN EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

I expressed my regret at the last meeting that the Central Advisory Board of Education could not hold its annual session until November, but this has also had one advantage that we are meeting within three months to consider measures for the reconstruction of education in India. In the last meeting of the Board I drew your attention to some of our most important and pressing problems. What I would like the Board to do at the present meeting is to draw up a programme of reform and suggest measures which will bring them into effect without delay.

I think you will agree that reform has become urgent in two spheres of education in India. The first is the field of university education and the other of school education. So far as the reform of university education is concerned, we will have to depend mainly on the activities of the University Grants Commission which, as you know, has been functioning since December last. The Commission will be the agency through which we propose to carry out all our programmes of university reform. It consists of well-known and experienced educationists and is fully aware both of the problems the universities have to face and of its own responsibility in the matter. I am glad that the Commission has at its very inception, started its work with despatch

*Speech at the 21st meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, New Delhi, February 7, 1954.

and taken one decision which I consider to be of basic importance.

You will agree that there can be no adequate improvement of university education till there are better qualified and satisfied professors. Until university teachers are recognised for their standard of scholarship and character, they cannot offer to the students the leadership which we expect from them. No real improvement of university education is possible nor can the universities give what we expect from them till this condition is satisfied. The Commission has thereof taken up as its very first task the question of improving the conditions of service of universities teachers, and I have accepted its recommendations in this behalf.

In the last meeting of the Board it was pointed out that, though the Board had accepted generally the recommendations of the University Education Commission nearly four years ago, hardly any steps had been taken for their implementation except in the case of the Central Universities. The Board, therefore, decided to appoint a Committee to survey the position and suggest measures for the speedy implementation of these recommendations. This Committee has submitted its report which will be one of the items for your discussion. Briefly, the Committee has recommended that immediate steps must be taken to amend various University Acts in order to reconstitute University Senates, Syndicates and Academic Councils so as to free them from intrigues and political influence. The Committee has, in this connection, placed the greatest emphasis on the method of appointment of the Vice-Chancellor and suggested that immediate steps be taken to adopt a procedure more or less in conformity with that followed by Delhi University. The Committee has also recommended : (a) an improvement in the scales of salaries of University teachers, (b) the provision of Government loans to enable the universities to build students' hostels and teachers' quarters, (c) a greater emphasis on tutorial, as opposed to the lecture, method of instruction, and (d) the provision of merit scholarships to enable poor but deserving students to pursue their studies. After the Board has considered the report and made its recommendations, they will be forwarded to the University Grants Commission for necessary action.

The reform of university education is important and urgent,

but from the point of view of the present needs of the country, the reform of school education is even more important and urgent. Until schools improve, university education cannot but remain unsatisfactory. Of the various stages of school education, the one which is in most urgent need of reform is that of secondary education. You will remember that the Secondary Education Commission has already surveyed this field, and you have appointed a Committee to study its recommendations and select those which ought to be put into effect immediately. The Committee has submitted its report, and it is for you to approve it with such modifications as you may consider necessary. Since the Board is the highest educational body in the country and includes among its members representatives of both the Central and the State Governments, I am confident that any recommendations you may make will be implemented without delay. Insofar as it concerns the Government of India, I can assure you that we will take immediate steps for their implementation.

As I told you at the last meeting of the Board, secondary education cannot meet the needs of the country till it is reorganised. In this connection, three things appear to me to be of great importance.

(i) Secondary education must be so fashioned that it will be the completion of education for the majority of the people. It must not be a mere entrance to the university but be a stage complete in itself.

(ii) Its pattern and content should be such that it may serve the needs of different groups of people with different aptitudes. It must not be cast in a rigid and cast-iron frame.

(iii) We have accepted basic education as the pattern of education at the elementary level. Secondary education should be so modelled as to complete the process of instruction initiated at the elementary stage and train up citizens who are able to discharge their responsibilities of citizenship. The emphasis on some one craft in the Secondary Education Commission's report appears to me to be valuable from this point of view.

Iam glad that the Secondary Education Commission has

paid due attention to these points and they have been stressed by the Committee you appointed. I am sure that you will also consider them with the care that they deserve.

One of the major recommendations of the Committee you appointed is that the educational structure in the country should eventually consist of eight years' integrated elementary (basic) education, four years of secondary education and three years of university education. This will mean that normally a child will be in the basic (junior and senior) school till he is fourteen, and will then have four years of high school followed by a three years' course at the university leading to the Bachelor's degree. The Committee has drawn special attention to the Commission's recommendation that languages, general science, social studies and a craft should form the core subjects of secondary education for all. In addition, the Committee has given the highest priority to the introduction of diversified courses in the following main groups :

(1) Humanities.
(2) Sciences.
(3) Technical Subjects.
(4) Commercial Subjects.
(5) Agricultural Subjects.
(6) Fine Arts.
(7) Home Sciences.

The Committee has also reported that there should be one examination at the end of the secondary course. Greater emphasis should, however, be placed on periodical tests and the regular progress report of students in the curricular and co-curricular activities. The Training Colleges should not charge any tuition fees and teachers under training should be given their full salaries or stipends that will meet their expenses. Finally, the Committee has reiterated the Commission's recommendation that the higher secondary examination should be made the normal qualification for most government services.

If we accept these recommendations, as I hope you will, we must try to fix some targets, for without such targets our programmes of reform are bound to remain vague and indefinite. The Committee has reported that about five per cent of the existing

secondary schools should be converted into multi-purpose schools in the course of the next two years and another ten per cent in the next five years. To me it appears that this programme of reform is slow and must be accelerated.

I agree that in any measure of educational reform, progress is bound to be slow in the beginning. The pace must, however, be steadily quickened and in the later stage we must achieve really rapid progress. I consider that the first task in the context is to define a target date for the complete reorganisation of secondary education. My own idea is that this task must be accomplished within ten years. I confess that even ten years appear to me too long and would be happy if the period could be shortened still. I hope the Board will consider the question carefully and suggest measures which may contribute to this end.

Once this general target has been set, we have to consider specific items. I have already said that I consider the target set by the Committee regarding the conversion of existing schools into multi-purpose ones to be slow. I am of the view that at least 25 per cent of the existing schools must be so converted as early as possible. The Board may consider the suggestion and define the period in which this should be done.

The Committee has drawn our attention to the difficulty of transforming existing schools to the new pattern, and rightly pointed out that it is bound to take time. This may be true in some respects, but there are some changes like those in the curriculum and reform in examinations, where the process of reform can begin without delay. Our programme therefore ought to be that during the next two years programmes for reconstruction of curriculums and reform in examination should be carried out on as wide a range as possible.

I would now like to draw your attention to another problem of the greatest importance to the future of our education. This is the problem of students' unrest. Since the attainment of independence, there has been a marked deterioration in order and discipline among students. In the last two years, there has been one incident after another in which students have been involved. This has become a cause of national concern, and everyone who has any sense of responsibility is troubled by these developments.

What worries me most is that the extent and magnitude of

students' unrest is very often without any relation whatever to its supposed cause. In recent months we have witnessed ugly developments in Lucknow and Allahabad. The trouble arose out of the question as to whether or not the membership of the University Union should be compulsory or voluntary. The university authorities were of the view that students should not be compelled to become members of the University Union. The students held the opposite view. The authorities at Lucknow later accepted the demand of the students, but there arose a new question about the constitution of the Union. I do not wish to enter into the controversy as to the merits of the question. What grieves and surprises me is that there should be such turmoil over the question of the constitution of a students' union. It suddenly appeared as if it was not a matter between the authorities and students of a university but a conflict between two enemies who were ready to fight against each other at the slightest provocation. The students set up an Action Committee which drew up a programme of struggle. Procedures which belong to belligerents were thus imported into university affairs. What happened later is well known to you and cannot but be a cause of the greatest sorrow to everyone who has the welfare of the country at heart.

This issue of students' unrest has now reached a stage where the Board must pay the greatest attention to it, explore its causes and suggest measures of remedy. While these events were happening in Lucknow, I called a conference which was attended by some eminent educationists and the Prime Minister. We considered the issue as carefully as we could and the conclusion to which we reached was later placed before the Congress Working Committee, which has passed a well-considered resolution in the matter. You are, no doubt, aware of this resolution, but I want the Board to give further thought to it and consider it more in its educational implications. A note on the subject has been prepared by Sri Humayun Kabir which is down for discussion in your agenda. I want you to consider this note in its different aspects and advise the Governments at the Centre and the States on the steps which must be taken if we are to check the growing indiscipline and unrest among our students. Unless this is done in time, it will threaten the foundations of our educational structure.

I will in fact go further and say that such unrest among the

students strikes at the root of our national future. The student of today is the potential leader of tomorrow. He will have to sustain the social, political and economic activities of the community. If he is not properly trained and does not develop the necessary resources of character and knowledge, he cannot supply the leadership which the nation will need. We must, therefore, adopt measures which will eradicate the causes of students' unrest and make the universities creative centres of learning and leadership.

4

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

I am glad to welcome you again to this the twentieth meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education. I regret that it has not been possible to call the meeting earlier. When it became clear that it could not be held before August or September, I decided that we should wait till the Report of the Secondary Education Commission had been published and made available to the members for consideration. This, as you know, was submitted at the end of August and the Board will therefore have an opportunity to consider it at this meeting. I have, however, directed that in future the meetings of the Central Advisory Board should be held every year in the third week of January.

All educationists today are concerned at the evident lack of adjustment between the educational system and the needs of the community. The problem has assumed gigantic proportions today but its origin must be traced to the beginning of modern education in India.

When the modern system of education was fashioned for the country, sufficient attention was not paid to our needs and ideals. There was no National Government and hence the system of education that was built up looked more to the needs of the Government than to the needs of the people of the country.

*Speech at the twentieth annual meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, New Delhi, November 9, 1953.

Though the East India Company, on becoming the rulers of the country, accepted the need of providing education in the modern sciences, the main need of the Company was to train up a number of English-educated persons who could help it in carrying on the administration of the country. Education was therefore organised to ensure the supply of an adequate number of English-educated Indians, and the attention of the Government was concentrated on providing higher education needed for the training of such personnel. Since, however, it is impossible to have students at a higher stage unless they have gone through the stages of elementary and secondary education, the Company made some provision for education at these stages as well, but the emphasis was nevertheless on higher education and the other stages were subsidiary and subservient to it.

So long as the number of persons educated in English was not larger than that required by Government, there was no problem of the educated unemployed. This situation continued till the beginning of the 20th century. An English-educated Indian was then almost sure of a job but already a situation was developing when the supply of Indians with university education was tending to become larger than the demand. Government service could not absorb all educated Indians nor had there been any development of commerce and industry which could profitably use such personnel. In the last few decades, this problem had steadily become more acute. We, therefore, find a growing volume of criticism against the prevalent system of education and one cannot deny that this criticism is, to a large extent, justified. If the result of education is to create a situation where society is not able to utilise the services of the educated there is obviously some defect which must be remedied. Increasing stress is now being placed on technical education but the position has not eased as there is no clear picture of how the national industries would develop. The result is that there is growing unemployment among persons educated not only in the academic disciplines but also in various technical subjects. We find that the surplus over requirements is increasing every day. Since there is no alternative mode of utilising this body of educated personnel, the result is a growing volume of dissatisfaction in society and a sense of frustration among young men and women who have received the highest training available in the country.

It is, of course, true that if we consider India's total population, the number of persons who are receiving higher education is by no means large. If only 3.5 lakhs of students are in the universities in a population of over 350 millions no one can say that the number of university students is too great. Since, however, the present state of the country's development in agriculture, industry and commerce does not enable us to provide gainful employment even for this small number, it has become a burden for society. Today, our universities are like factories which are turning out products that do not conform to the demands of the society in either number or quality. It is therefore necessary to carry out changes in higher education which will, by carrying out improvements in both directions, enable society to utilise the talent and training of the men and women who are receiving education beyond the school stage.

The need for educational reform has been voiced from every side but those who plead for such reform do not generally have any clear or concrete picture before them There is a general desire that something should be done for the reform of education but few know what that "something" ought to be. It is therefore necessary to survey the whole field of education and prepare a comprehensive plan of positive reconstruction of education so that we can maintain, for the country, the progress that has been envisaged after the attainment of independence.

I would in this context like to place before you my conception of the function of education in society. Every individual has a right to an education that will enable him to develop his faculties and live a full human life. Such education is the birthright of every citizen. A State cannot claim to have discharged its duty till it has provided for every single individual the means to knowledge and self-betterment. For education upto this standard, the question of requirements of society does not arise, nor can we provide facilities only in accordance with the existing demands. Every individual, unconditionally and without qualifications, is entitled to education upto this stage. To my mind, the requisite standard for such education is the secondary stage and I am convinced that regardless of the question of employment, the State must make available to all citizens the facilities of education upto the secondary stage.

Beyond this stage, the position is somewhat different. When

we consider the facilities for higher education in a State, we must match the facilities to the needs of society. Any maladjustment between demand and supply at this stage would create problems which the State must at all costs seek to avoid. Apart from any other reason, the provision of higher education is so expensive that no State can afford to increase the number of persons receiving such education beyond what it can absorb. In the field of economics, there is always a close correlation between demand and supply. Any deviation from such correlation leads to social crises. In the field of higher education, we must accept the same law and regulate the supply according to the demands of society.

Since the attainment of independence, the Government of India have been conscious of the need of preparing a comprehensive blue-print for educational reconstruction Some steps in that direction have already been taken. You are aware that during these five years we have appointed two high-power commissions to enquire into the problems of university and secondary education and make recommendations for their improvement and reform. The problem of elementary education has also been repeatedly considered, and there is a consensus of opinion that it should be of the basic pattern. The Government have already taken a decision in this behalf, and the time has come when similar decisions must be taken in the field of university and secondary education.

I have already said that the provision of secondary education must be universal and without any reference to any special needs of society. This, however, demands a reform of the system which will enable the vast majority of the people to find in it a satisfying and complete stage of education. The Commission whose report was recently published and which you are going to consider today has recommended that secondary education should be reorganised. It must be the completion of education for the vast majority of people. At present, it is only a stepping stone to education in the universities. In future, it must be for the majority the entrance to life in various industries, crafts and professions and serve as an entrance to higher education only for a select minority. For a proper and healthy development of society, it is necessary that the vast numbers who are in elementary and secondary schools accept the responsibility of various traditional occupations in accordance

with their taste, aptitude and training. There must also be unambiguous recognition by society that all professions are socially valuable and a person is to be honoured if he performs the duties of his station with competence and sincerity. If we are to ensure equal respect for various professions and provide that the majority seek such professions at the end of secondary stage of education, it is necessary to reorganise secondary education to provide for a variety of diversified courses. I think that one of the most valuable recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission is the insistence that every student at the secondary level must learn some craft irrespective of the fact whether he or she aims at adopting it as a profession or not.

Such a reorganisation of secondary education presupposes and will be facilitated by a further expansion and improvement of basic education. I have already stated that it is an accepted policy of the Government that education at the elementary level shall be of the basic pattern. The real object of basic education is to train up children as members of a community and develop in them habits of co-operative action for the social good. While the ideals of basic education have been accepted by the Centre and the States, I regret to say that the implementation of the programme has not been as rapid as we would wish. Greater emphasis must be placed on the early conversion of all elementary education to the basic pattern, but we must, at the same time, remember that this can succeed only if basic education is conceived in an imaginative and creative way. One of the reasons for the inadequate response of the State and the community to the appeal of basic education has been the rigidity of outlook of some of the advocates of this pattern of education. We have to recognise that all education is and must always be an experiment. Basic education is a great experiment and we have to recognise the fact that it has not yet been carried out on a sufficiently wide basis. We must be prepared to develop, modify and adapt it to meet the divergent needs of town and village, of industrial and agricultural areas and of the different parts of the country, some of which are coastal, some mountainous and some riparian and some arid or semi-arid. We must also recognise that there are differences in taste and aptitude of children and there are some who are more practical-minded while others have a greater predilection for abstract or artistic activities.

The most important consideration for the reform of university education appears to be to limit the number of students who enter their portals. I have already said that the present number of such students cannot be regarded as excessive but we have to ensure that with the expansion of elementary and secondary education there is no inordinate increase in these numbers till the necessary agricultural, industrial and commercial development has taken place to sustain a larger number of highly trained personnel. The chief aim of university education must therefore be consolidation and improvement.

One of the important measures for reform of university education is the need to dissociate the possession of a degree from the conditions of service. At present, nobody can hope to get a responsible post without a degree. The result is that everyone wants to enter a university, nor for the pursuit of knowledge but in order to secure a passport to a job. The result of such insistence has been that instead of an emphasis on study and self-improvement, educational institutions have tended to emphasise the securing of a degree by some means or other. Not only have educational standards been lowered and all kinds of malpractices encouraged but students have missed the very purpose of education and concentrated on the acquisition of a degree without considering the means to it. It is not surprising that in this background students have continually pressed for an increase in the percentage of passes. The universities also have consciously or unconsciously fallen in line and without adequate attention to standards striven to increase the number of passes in various examinations. There has been, in consequence, a slackness both in admission to the universities and in examinations conducted by them.

After considering all aspects, it is today my considered judgment that, except for professional services, the possession of a degree should not be a pre-requisite for appointment to government service. I can understand that we may have to make an exception in the case of professional jobs. In the case of an engineer, a medical man, a technician or a teacher, it is not enough that the practitioner has merely the necessary theoretical knowledge. In their case, the discipline of studying such subjects for a number of years under proper guidance and supervision is essential for the successful performance of their duties. Leaving aside such professional services, I do not see any justification for insisting on

a degree for appointment to other posts, especially where such posts are filled by the Public Service Commissions on the results of examinations specially conducted for the purpose. I realise that the Union Public Service Commission or the State Public Service Commissions, as constituted today, cannot cope adequately with the volume of work which will devolve on them if this proposal is implemented, but we can meet this difficulty by establishing two or more Boards for the recruitment of personnel at different levels. It appears to me almost self-evident that since such Boards do, in any case conduct examinations for recruitment to the services, the demand for the possession of a degree is very largely unnecessary. For example, in the case of jobs for which it is necessary today for a candidate to be a B.A., we may lay down that a candidate's general ability and knowledge should be equal to that of a graduate, so that while we ensure that we get the right people for right jobs, the present unhealthy emphasis on degrees will be replaced by that on ability.

With the increase in the number of pupils at the elementary and secondary stage, this will mean that a smaller proportion will be provided with facilities for education at the higher stage. The corollary to this is that ability, and ability alone, must be the criterion for entry into the universities and other institutions of higher learning. Today, very often it is the financial position of the family which decides whether a student is to go to the university or not. With limitation of numbers, we must ensure that poverty is not a ban on entering a university. This demands a much larger provision of stipends and scholarships for meritorious students. The additional expenditure will have to be met by the State and we must explore different alternatives to find the necessary resources. One suggestion which occurs to me is that the less meritorious but more affluent student may be required to pay higher fees. In any case the fees in our universities are exceedingly low. There is a case for raising these fees provided the number of scholarships and stipends are simultaneously increased to ensure that poor but meritorious students are not shut out of the universities.

It appears to me that increasing emphasis will have to be placed on providing higher education in the field of agriculture, medicine, engineering, technology and science. This does not, however, mean that we can afford to neglect the humanities. No

nation can survive if it neglects the discipline of the spirit. We must therefore ensure that the increasing emphasis on science and technology does not lead to any reduction in the facilities for education in the liberal arts. The Government of India are fully aware of the importance of encouraging higher education in all these fields, and a small beginning has been made by providing a number of scholarships to encourage research in science and industry, and you will be glad to hear that from the current year it is proposed to institute similar scholarships for research and further studies in the humanities also.

The educational picture I have is that of universal education of the basic pattern for all children of school age, followed by a diversified secondary education. Thereafter, we must have, for a select minority, facilities for higher education in all fields of arts and science and see that this is of the highest standard.

We have been stressing for years the need for educational reform, but so far no practical step could be taken in this direction. We can no longer afford to delay and must immediately set in motion an effective machinery for reform. The University Education Commission's Report has been with us for the last four years and we have recently received the Report of the Secondary Education Commission as well. We must now seriously consider how best to implement the recommendations of these two Commissions as soon as possible. I would like you to give first priority to this question in your discussions.

It was important in this connection to create an effective and permanent agency to supervise the standards of university education and to co-ordinate them. Accordingly, the Government of India are setting up a University Grants Commission of which the formal announcement will be made very soon. The Commission will be a statutory body. The necessary Bill will be presented in Parliament in the coming budget session. But since it is necessary that the Commission should begin to function without delay, the Government have decided to set it up immediately on the basis of a Resolution passed last year. After the Bill is passed, the Commission's scope and powers will be extended in conformity with it and its composition enlarged.

5

TAGORE AND INDIAN EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

As I stand here today, my thoughts go back to the memory of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore who some fifty years ago started this institution to provide a meeting place for the culture of the East and the West. It was from its inception a unique educational experiment; for, while it sought to preserve all that was of value in our ancient heritage, it was modern in spirit and welcomed the contributions which the West has made to the development of the human spirit. It was this combination of the past and the present which distinguished Santiniketan.

There were, no doubt, some Indian institutions which sought preserve our traditional values, but since they shut their doors against the influence of the modern age, they were mere relics of the past than institutions with a living message. On the other hand, the Government of the day founded an educational system which was intended primarily to train people for employment under the Government. Its main object was not the dissemination of culture, and even when it did so it was the culture of the West. There was hardly any educational institution which fully appreciated Indian culture and civilisation, while at the same time recognising the need for changes in the light of changed circumstances. It was Gurudev's achievement that he, almost

*Address at the formal inauguration of the Visva-Bharati as a Central University, Shantiniketan, September 22, 1951.

single-handed, filled this void. A great admirer of the Western culture and science, he was at the same time conscious of the values of our ancient heritage. He held that neither must the West drive out the East, nor the East resist the beneficial influences coming from the West.

The thing which has always struck me about Gurudev was his lofty humanism which arose above all sectarian and communal limitations. Born in one of the pioneer Brahmo families of Bengal, he developed quite early in life an outlook in which the whole world became to him a home and he felt a close affiliation with all humanity. This sense of kinship with the whole world is the essence of Indian culture, and perhaps its greatest contribution to the world. The development of such a spirit in Gurudev was encouraged by the atmosphere of his family in which the influence of Sufi poetry mingled with the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century England and above all there reigned the spirit of the truths of the Upanishads. It was this consciousness of the fundamental spiritual unity of man that led Gurudev to found the Visva-Bharati where the world could unite in common brotherhood and realise the ideals of peace, goodness and unity.

You are all aware that in the Visva-Bharati Act we have included a quotation from the objects of Visva-Bharati as defined by Gurudev. I may tell you that some of my colleagues did not consider the inclusion of this necessary and it was not therefore included in the draft Bill as presented to Parliament. I, however, found that there was a strong feeling in Parliament for its inclusion in the Act and accordingly it was decided to do so with the exception of the last phrase in the objectives as defined by Gurudev. I do not wish to tell you what my personal opinion was. In a matter like this, the Cabinet is jointly responsible, and therefore we are all party to the decision which was finally taken. I may, however, tell you that those who favoured the leaving out of this passage did not do so because of any doubt about the noble idea expressed therein, but only because they felt that a reference to God is out of place in legislation concerning a university. The reason for leaving out this phrase was the same as that for which the name of God was left out of our Constitution. There is, as you know, a school of thought which holds that anything which lends itself to religious colouring should be excluded from a legal enactment.

I would, however, like to impress upon you that it is immaterial that this phrase has been left out of the Act. It may find no place in legislation, but it certainly has a place—and perhaps a place of supreme importance—in the life of this University. I will declare with all the emphasis at my command that the objective as defined by Gurudev, including the phrase left out in the Act, must remain the objective of your University and of all its teachers and its pupils. The truth is that in these three terms used by Gurudev :

Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam,

we have a conception of God which rises above all narrow limitations of race, religion or creed. I may also tell you that if the term *Advaitam* is translated into Arabic, it would read as *Wahidahu La Shariq* : the One who has no second, which is the highest affirmation of the monotheistic belief.

Another element in the objectives of the Visva-Bharati which has appealed to me greatly is the phrase which Gurudev used in inaugurating all ceremonial functions of the University. In affirming the ideal of the Visva-Bharati the Chairman first reads or causes to be read, *Yatra Visyam Bhavatyekaneedam* (the whole world has here become one home). I can think of no higher conception of humanity than that expressed in this beautiful phrase. I will appeal to every one of you that whenever you have any function, you will never forget to start it with this proclamation of faith in the unity of mankind.

Today, with the passing of the Act a new order has started for you, but you must always remember that yours is a unique institution. You should therefore not merely try to imitate what other institutions do, but on the contrary try to set an example to them. You should derive your inspiration not from the practice or profession of other universities, but from the lofty ideals of Gurudev. Other universities have over the decades developed a pattern which cannot be changed overnight, even though we may desire such a change. You have the advantage of starting with a pattern which is much nearer our ideals. Your effort should therefore be that other universities should adopt the message which Gurudev gave to the Visva-Bharati. I would appeal to you that you should maintain the traditions and the spirit which till now

have inspired you, and enrich them further in the spirit in which Gurudev welcomed good things from all sources.

I would like to address one word particularly to the teachers of the University. In the end, the quality of any institution depends upon the quality of its teachers. This is particularly true of a university like the Visva-Bharati which was built up by Gurudev, not on external pomp and grandeur but on the foundation of a spirit of service of his fellow-men. I am sure that those who have come to teach at this University have done so because they share that spirit. I know that materially many of you would have fared better if you had gone elsewhere, but nevertheless you come here to a life of comparative poverty because the ideal of Gurudev appealed to you. Now that the Visva-Bharati has become a Central University, I am sure that the same spirit will continue to inspire you. I do not for a moment suggest that emoluments here should be such as to deny teachers a reasonable standard of life, but I do insist that the teachers of this University owe it to the memory of Gurudev that they will not compare their scales of salary with those in other universities, but continue to teach according to the tradition he built up. This tradition has distinguished Visva-Bharati in the past and I am confident it will continue to do so in the future as well.

The same remarks will apply to the new constructions you have to undertake to house new departments of the University. I have already said that Gurudev did not depend on buildings to found his institution, but laid it down that much of the teaching should be in the open. This was in pursuance of his principles that education should be in conformity with nature, and keep as close to nature as possible. I am sure that the new constructions which you undertake will be in keeping with the traditions and atmosphere of the Visva-Bharati, and you will place your emphasis on the spirit rather than on the bricks and mortar of the buildings.

You have today a very heavy responsibility, for you have to bear the burden which Gurudev passed on to you. While he was with us, we could always look to him for inspiration and guidance, but now that he is no longer with us in body, we have to interpret to the best of our ability his ideals and principles. My sincere wish is that the authorities of the new university will all be inspired by his spirit, and carry out their duties and the objectives of Gurudev in a manner which he would have found

commendable. I need hardly assure you that so far as the Government are concerned, we will always take a special interest in your achievements, and watch your progress with interest and care.

I wish you godspeed in your new career as a Central University in the name of the One Supreme Being who is *Shantam*, *Shivam* and *Advaitam*.

6

FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN INDIA*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Of the problems which claimed our special attention after independence, one of the most important was that of national education and what may be called its system or pattern. We hear today an almost universal cry that there is something wrong with our educational system, that it has failed to meet the demands of the situation and, therefore, needs to be reformed. But, inspite of this feeling, there are very few people who have actually thought over the problem and are able to say what exactly is wrong with the system and in what manner it should be reformed.

An obvious defect, which should be evident to every one, is that the general education available to the common people is neither adequate, nor appropriate to their needs, and the privileged minority who are fortunate enough to receive higher education in the universities cannot be usefull employed. The result is that of the thousands of graduates who are turned out by our universities every year, a large proportion is unable to secure employment and is forced to join the ranks of the unemployed. There are at present about 3 to 3½ lakhs of students receiving education in our universities. This is by no means a large number for a country with a population of about 35 crores, and yet there is somewhere so radical a defect in our system that even this small number cannot find useful employment.

*Broadcast from AIR, New Delhi, September 30, 1953.

Unfortunately, the main objective of those who seek higher education in our country is to secure government service. It is obvious that the Government cannot give jobs to all. The result is that our educational system, instead of enabling people to become useful members of society, makes then superfluous and turns what should be an asset into a liability. If many of these educated persons had received no education, they could at least have earned their livelihood by some kind of manual labour. As it is, they cannot do even that.

Let me now, in the few minutes that are available to me, tell you what I think about this matter.

Every individual has a right to an education that will enable him to develop his faculties and live a full human life. Such education is the birth right of every citizen. A State cannot claim to have discharged its duty till it has provided for every single individual the means to the acquisition of knowledge and self-betterment. For education up to this standard, the question of requirements of society does not arise, nor can we provide facilities only in accordance with the existing demands. Every individual, unconditionally and without qualifications, is entitled to education up to this stage. To my mind, the requisite standard for such education is the secondary stage and I am convinced that regardless of the question of employment, the State must make available to all citizens the facilities of education up to the secondary stage.

There are three stages in the secondary education --elementary, middle and higher. Of these, elementary and middle are the more important because the foundation of the entire edifice of national education is laid in these two early stages. If the foundation is weak or wrongly laid, the rest of the structure is insecure or faulty. For these two stages we have accepted the pattern of basic education which is of great importance to the whole structure of our national education. To the extent to which we are able to implement effectively this pattern, we shall succeed in reforming the entire structure.

Beyond this stage, the position is somewhat different. When we consider the facilities for higher education in a State, we must match the facilities to the needs of society. Any maladjustment between demand and supply at this stage would create problems which the State must at all costs seek to avoid. Apart from any

other reason, the provision of higher education is so expensive that no State can afford to increase the number of persons receiving such education beyond what it can absorb. In the field of economics, there is always a close correlation between demand and supply. Any deviation from such correlation leads to social crises. In the field of higher education, we must accept the same law and fashion the supply according to the demands of society. If the supply is less than the demand, the progress of society is impeded; if it is more, there is unemployment. A fundamental defect of our educational system is that the very obvious and important considerati n is overlooked. A university degree has been made a necessary qualification for government service, with the result that everyone runs after a degree and, having secured it, is faced with the disillusionment that what he spent his years and money on is not of much value in the market.

If we wish to avoid these unfortunate consequences, we should so organise our system of education that the majority of our people, having passed through the secondary stage, are able to engage themselves in the various profession, industries, handicrafts, etc., and only a small number which is considered adequate to the needs of society, go on to the universities for higher education. It is obvious that we cannot forcibly prevent people from joining the universities, but we can certainly create such conditions as will eliminate the present unhealthy inducements which lure so many students into the universities, not for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of degrees. It is unnecessary for me, nor is there sufficient time, to discuss this point in more detail.

There is, however, in this connection one more question which naturally arises. Is the present exaggerated emphasis on university degrees as a qualification for government service justified? The fact that a university degree is a necessary condition for government service has led people to look upon universities degrees as a passport to government service. Those who join universities do so not to cultivate talent but to secure this passport. This state of affairs has had its repercussions on our universities also. Consciously or unconsciously an atmosphere was created which inevitably brought their standards down. Gradually a mental attitude was developed which seemed to say: "Let us have as many students as we can get and let as many as possible be given

degrees." The natural result was that the standards of education steadily declined and how low they have become can be easily judged by those who are in a position to test the merit of our present-day graduates.

We know that in other countries government servants are not recruited in this fashion. In England, for example, while degrees are a necessary qualification for certain posts requiring professional training, as in the case of doctors, professors, engineers and the like, for other appointments the only qualification deemed necessary are of age and of particular ability for the post. A university degree as such is not an essential condition.

It is time that we too in India considered seriously the adoption of a similar procedure of recruitment. Why should we continue to regard the university degree as a passport to service ? Our stress should be on ability and not the possession of a degree. Our Public Service Commissions should evolve methods of testing such ability. For example, in the case of jobs for which it is necessary today for a candidate to be a B.A., we may lay down that a candidate's general ability and knowledge should be equal to that of a graduate, so that while we ensure that we get the right people for right jobs, the present unhealthy emphasis on degrees will be replaced by that on ability, This alone will go a long way in changing the mentality of our students.

We have, of course, to bear in mind that, so far as professional services are concerned, the acquisition of a university degree will continue to be necessary. We should allow no relaxation in this matter. We cannot accept a doctor or an engineer or a professor except on the basis of his academic qualifications. It is only in the case of appointments of a general nature which require no special or technical qualifications that we have to change the procedure of recruitment.

There is no doubt that such a change would add considerably to the work of our Public Service Commissions who will have to hold examinations for appointments. It may be necessary for us to increase the number of Public Service Commissions, but whatever arrangements may prove to be necessary, the step is worth-taking.

Let me briefly recapitulate what I have said :

(1) We have to remould our system of education and so

organise it that a great majority of our people, after completing their secondary education, should be absorbed in the various professions, industries, handicrafts, etc. Only a small proportion should pursue higher education in the universities and their number should not exceed the capacity of the society to make good use of them.

(2) The most urgent and important changes needed are in our system of secondary education. Our present system of secondary education was conceived as a stepping stone to the universities. What we want now is a system of secondary education which will not be a mere means to something else but an end in itself.

(3) We have accepted the pattern of basic education, of which the main idea is that learning should be not merely through books but through some form of manual work. This principle should be given effect to throughout the secondary education stage and should, in fact, become the basic principle of our national education.

(4) Since we propose to change the shape of our secondary education, it is necessary that it should not be cast in a single rigid mould. It should have sufficient elasticity to meet the different needs of different groups of people. The Secondary Education Commission has made some very valuable recommendations in this respect which need to be seriously considered.

(5) We have also to consider whether the present insistence on degrees as a necessary condition for government service should be continued or modified.

The problem of how best to improve the standards of our university education is no less important, but the limited time at my disposal prevents me from dwelling on it.

7

PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

When in May 1948, I formulated a twelve-point programme of social education for the country, one of the main services I had in mind was the provision of a Public Library for adult education. The need of such library service in any programme of social education is self-evident. It is obvious that adults who acquire literacy at a comparatively advanced age cannot be expected to read many books during their period of education. There is, therefore, a risk that they may replace into illiteracy, unless they are provided with books, journals and newspapers that will be both interesting and intelligible to them. Ordinary newspapers and journals and the average type of literature would not always serve their ends, as these would employ vocabulary that may at times be too difficult for the new literates. We have a sad example of this in the experience of the large number of soldiers who were made literate during World War II, but on demobilisation relapsed into illiteracy through lack of suitable literature.

Such a library service is necessary not only for adult neo-literates but also for the children who complete their basic education. The vast majority of them give up their studies before literacy has become permanently established. This is also one reason why inspite of the fact that some 40 per cent of the children of school age attend basic and other primary schools and have

*Inaugural address at the Delhi Public Library, Delhi, October 27, 1951.

been doing so for some decades, the percentage of literacy for the adult population is still so low. A library service which would provide suitable literature for those who have attended basic and primary schools is, therefore, an essential condition for the maintenance and development of literacy in the country.

I was, therefore, much pleased to learn that at its 4th General Conference held in Paris in 1949, Unesco resolved to organise in one of the member-states a pilot project for public libraries. The project was to be undertaken at the request and with the assistance of the State and as part of its campaign for the spread of fundamental education. I was anxious that India should be the member-state to make that request and establish a pilot library with the assistance of Unesco. I felt that Delhi, where the social education programme had already been in operation for some time, offered a very suitable venue for the location of such a pilot project. Delhi is a large city and at the same time within easy reach of rural areas. It is served by a system of roads which makes it accessible from all parts of the State. Much is being done both in the city and in the rural areas in the sphere of mass education by Government, the Municipal and the District Board authorities and private individuals. Delhi has a cosmopolitan population and seems eminently suitable to satisfy some of the requirements defined by Unesco for the location of a Public Library Service. I felt if this pilot project could succeed in Delhi with its varied populations engaged in different kinds of activities, it would serve as an excellent model which could be followed elsewhere in India and outside.

I am very happy that after discussion with Unesco it has been possible to arrive at an agreement and the first Unesco Pilot Project for Public Libraries has been established here. It will form an integral part of the literacy drive of the city and its environs and its service will be directed primarily towards the needs of newly literate adults. It is, however, not our intention to forget the needs of the general reader. There will also be provision of books which will suit the taste of adults of varied educational backgrounds. Nor have we forgotten the needs of children and the Library will have a section devoted specially to them. In accordance with the spirit of our Constitution and the Unesco Public Libraries Manifesto, the Delhi Public Library will be a free public library and open to all members of the community "without distinction of race, religion,

class or occupation."

It was felt that a public library of this type would be best administered by an autonomous body. Accordingly, by a resolution of the Government of India, the Delhi Library Board has been set up to administer the Library under the general supervision and control of the Ministry of Education and Unesco.

The Preamble of the resolution which sets up the Delhi Library Board has defined the object of the Library as :

> *providing for the people of the city of Delhi a public library service and a community centre for popular education which shall be a model for all public library development in India and in all countries where similar development of public libraries can be undertaken. The Library shall be designed so as to carry out the policy of the Unesco Public Libraries Manifesto and to serve the needs of popular education without distinction of class, creed, occupation or race, and specially those of neo-literates and children.*

Under the agreement between the Government of India and Unesco, it has been agreed that the Government of India will contribute during the fiscal year 1950-51 a sum of Rs. 1,07,000 for the establishment of the Pilot Library. The Delhi Municipal Committee has agreed to contribute Rs. 25,000 annually. Unesco will contribute, subject to the vote of the General Assembly, sixty thousand dollars in the form of payment for the services of an Advisory Director, Fellowships, salary of the Director for one year, the supply of equipment for adult education and extension work and also for the supply and production of books specially required for neo-literates.

By the end of September 1950, over 5,000 books were secured for the Library of which a little less than a thousand are in English, over 3,500 are in Hindi and over 500 are in Urdu. Foreign interest in the project is evidenced by the donation of books by Care, the National Book Centre in London and the Silver Burdett Company of New York.

As indicated above, the Library is intended not only to supply books and other reading material to adults and children but also to serve as a community centre for popular education. In order to make the place attractive, a garden has been laid out in front of

the Library to provide open air reading space. It is proposed that the garden will be flood-lit and will enable adults to read in comfort on summer nights.

The connection between a library and a garden may not be apparent to many, but men who are real lovers of literature have always associated gardens with books. Hafiz, the famous poet of Shiraz, has given us his conception of the highest form of life in the following verses :

Du yar-i-zeerak o waz bada-i kuhan du-manee
Faraghatee o kitabee o goosha-i-chamanee;
Man in maqam ba dunya-aqbat na-deham
Agarche dar pai-am uftand khalq anjumanee,

Two wise friends, two goblets of old wine, amplitude of leisure, books and a corner of a garden :
If these five things are provided, I will have no other desire in life.
If I were offered instead all the gifts of this life and the next
I would still refuse the exchange.

I have every hope that visitors to this Library will find at least the two wise friends mentioned by Hafiz, if not more. Leisure also will, I hope, be theirs. They will also have the opportunity of reading the books of their choice in a selected corner of the garden. One condition will, of course, remain unfilled. In these days of a crusade for dry Delhi, I cannot promise the readers any goblets of wine, whether old or new ! I may, however, assure them that efforts will be made to supply fresh *sherbat* or hot tea in place of vintage wine, even though I know that to adherents of the cup this may appear a poor recompense !

I would also like to place on record, on behalf of the Government of India and on my own behalf, our appreciation of the help and co-operation we have received from Unesco in the development of this project. Unesco has not only given us the services of an Advisory Director, but also provided a Fellowship under which an Indian national has been trained for assuming charge as the permanent Director of the Library. When Dr. Jaime Torres Bodet was in Delhi in March this year, he took a personal interest in the

development of the scheme. I am thankful to him and to Unesco for having placed at our disposal the services of Mr. Edward Sydney, M.C., F.L.A., Borough Librarian of Leyton, London, England, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Library Association. Mr. Sydney is internationally known for his practical experience of the use of public Library in the cause of adult education and has rendered us great service in the planning and establishment of the library.

I know that the Library is only in its initial stage and we cannot show any tangible results yet. I have, however, no doubt in my mind that the foundations have been truly laid and will in course of time, if we are true to our ideals, be a magnificent edifice of service to the people at large. The task of social education which faces our country is a colossal one and will require the devotion and service of all our national workers. I am happy that the Prime Minister who has devoted himself to the evocation of a scientific temper in our people is with us today. I am confident that his association with this project at its very inception will give to our efforts a sense of rational purpose and direction. May his large-hearted vision and his devotion to the eternal values of life inspire all the workers of the Delhi Pilot Library ! I am confident that this Library will be an exemplar not only for other libraries in India, but for libraries in all Asian countries.

8

AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

A hard fact which we must face is that the economic life of India is not properly balanced between agriculture and industry. Though there has been considerable development in industry in India in the last fifty years, we cannot, by any means, call India an industrial country. The basis of our life is still agricultural and the vast majority of our people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. In fact, curious at it may seem, the pressure on the land has on the whole been increasing in spite of the growth of our industries. It is, therefore, all the more regrettable that we cannot produce enough food even to meet our own requirements. Roughly, eighty per cent of our people are in some way or the other connected with the land and yet we have to depend upon foreign countries to get enough food for our people. In sharp contrast, we find that the U.S.A., where not even 1/5th of the people work on the land, not only produces all its food but exports vast quantities to other parts of the world. We must, therefore, ask ourselves the reason why with 4/5ths of our people on the land we are still deficit in food supply, whereas other countries which do not use even 1/5th of their manpower for the production of food are surplus areas.

A searching enquiry into this problem is the more necessary as our position has not always been so bad as it is today. Until

*Speech at a meeting of the Vice-Chancellors of the Indian Universities and others, New Delhi, November 3, 1951.

some years ago, we have, in fact, been exporting wheat and other food grains, but since 1943 we seem to be suffering from a perpetual shortage. You all know about the efforts of the Governments, both at the Centre and the States, to increase the production of food though the Grow More Food Campaign. I think you will all agree that the results have not been commensurate with our efforts. 1951 has been a particularly difficult year. Even before the crisis eased through the help and co-operation of countries like the U.S.A., the U.K., Russia and China, new dangers had already appeared and threatened us with an equally difficult situation for the coming year. Obviously, we cannot always depend upon foreign countries to supply us with food. The present situation is difficult enough, but when we remember the rate at which our population is growing, the future difficulties are sure to be still greater. Unless we can devise methods by which the productivity of our land will increase so that we may provide adequate sustenance, not only to our existing population, but also to the additional mouths that will have to be fed, all the hopes we have cherished for the future of our country will be subject to a vast question mark. It is in this context that we have met here today. As educationists whose business is to train the manpower of the country, it is our duty to suggest methods by which we can overcome the threat of perpetual food shortage.

We know that the average yield of our land is one of the poorest in the world and this is so, inspite of the fact that the quality of our soil is perhaps second to none. The only explanation is that our methods of agriculture are not fully effective. We must, therefore, think in terms of a change in our agricultural methods. This can be achieved only if our agricultural education is thoroughly recast. I think you will all agree that the present system of agricultural education in India is not satisfactory. It has not proved adequate even in normal times. During an emergency like the present, its shortcomings are only too apparent. Most of our universities have some provision for agricultural education, but the education is mainly theoretical, so that the results we could expect from the application of science to agriculture do not materialise. Our agricultural graduates are fit for almost everything except becoming agriculturists themselves.

Our present agricultural education is defective because it lacks adequate practical basis. An even greater defect is that

agricultural education is not an essential part of the general education of the country. Education is intended to develop the potential abilities of the individual in the context of the requirements of society. In a country like India, where agriculture is not only the main profession but the dominant way of life, it is necessary that agriculture must enter intimately into every aspect of general education. We are now planning to transform the system of our primary education by converting it into basic education. Gandhiji, with the insight of a genius, saw that if education is to be creative and real fore millions of our people, it must seek to satisfy their basic requirements of food and clothing. Intellectual development can be adequate and satisfactory only in the context of satisfying these two basic needs. Our general education, especially in the earlier stages, must therefore, give a greater importance to the theory and practice of agriculture.

I have for sometime been considering the question of having some kind of conscription by which all students in our colleges and universities would be compelled to work for a period in fields and factories. I have, however, come to the conclusion that for various reasons his cannot be immediately done. In Western countries, the labour of young people has been effectively and usefully employed, as the problem of these countries is primarily one of shortage of labour. In our country, if there is an excess in anything, it is that of manpower. In fact, it will not be incorrect to say that almost all Indians are under-employed. To bring young people into the field of work would therefore, only aggravate under-employment. To difficulties in the way of conscripting large numbers of young people for service on the land may be mentioned here. The amateur labour of students and young persons generally proves to be more expensive. We must also, in view of the poverty of the majority of our people, maintain and perhaps also pay them a small salary and allowance. Most serious of all, the massing together of large numbers of young people, isolated from families, schools, and other social and religious checks, often carries with it the risk of encouraging militarism. Apart from this, there is always the difference between forced and voluntary service. We should consider all these factors before we decide to conscript young men into service on the land.

What I have said above in regard to students in general would not, however, apply to the students of agricultural schools and

colleges. In their case, it would be a necessary part of their training to do field work for a period before they are given diplomas or degrees. You are aware that on the advice of the All India Council for Technical Education and Scientific Manpower Committee, it is proposed that engineering and technical graduates must do a period of service training before they can enter their profession. I think such training is even more necessary for the students of agricultural schools and colleges.

I would in fact go further. While the idea of conscripting students in schools and colleges would be difficult to put into practice, I do not see any reason why colleges and schools in the rural or semi-rural areas should not have an agricultural section attached to them. The difficulties I have mentioned above arise only when the students are taken away from their homes or places of normal residence. There would be no such difficulty if students are required to do some agricultural work in the course of their normal college or school life. The difficulty of finding adequate land may stand in the way of carrying out this programme in educational institutions in large towns and cities. There is, however, no reason why schools and colleges in the rural areas or small towns should not have attached to them sufficient land which can be utilised for the purpose. Even colleges in larger towns and cities can co-operate in such a programme by establishing centres where, during vacations and other holidays, students can acquire an experience of simple practical agriculture by working on the farms. Many of you know that the universities in the U.K. and the U.S.A. sometimes adopt villages. I hope that in India also, schools and colleges in urban areas will adopt villages. There should be friendly competition among educational institutions as to which have done the best rural work. I hope that this Conference will devise some method of carrying out this programme, and also advise the Indian Council for Agricultural Research to set up a section devoted exclusively to the development of agricultural education in schools and colleges.

One grave drawback to which I would like to draw your attention is our curious failure to realise the dangers inherent in our present food situation. It is strange that inspite of a shortage of food and the people's knowledge of the fact, there is no passionate urge among them to increase food production in the country. If our young men and women in colleges and schools are not

sensitive to our problems, how are we going to overcome the perils which face us ? I am sure, you can all help in creating in young men and women a sense of the urgency of our problems. There are of course certain necessary measures which lie outside the sphere of educational authorities. Colleges and schools can, however, contribute a great deal to the solution of the problem if they create in young men and women the enthusiasm to increase the food production of the country. I am sure that if the universities provide extension education in agriculture, it will not only improve the quality of our agriculture but also make a deep impression on the public mind. It will help to break down the barriers which divide the literate classes from the unlettered. It will also improve the quality of our educated classes by bringing them nearer to the soil and giving a more practical bias to their minds.

I referred earlier to countries where agriculture is more productive, for each unit of manpower gives far better results than in India. It is obvious that if we are to improve our agricultural production, we must profit by the experience of such countries. We must, therefore, create closer contacts with all countries which have applied scientific methods to agriculture and shown tangible results of such application. Naturally, the first country we think of in this connection is the U.S.A. In industry as well as in agriculture. she has made a phenomenal progress. We must try a adopt and adapt her methods in both fields. She has under the Fullbright Act and other enactments made a generous provision for receiving from and sending out to India teachers and students from various fields of study. We must take full advantage of her generosity and utilise the services of the American experts in the various fields of agriculture.

The universities have always and in all countries played a leading part in transforming the quality of the life of the people. In order to perform this function successfully, the universities must base their programmmes on the real needs of the country. Until now, our university education has proved inadequate because, among other faults, it has ignored agriculture, which is the basis of Indian life. I would, therefore, appeal to all educationists to have this deficiency overcome by giving an agricultural bias to our school education and introducing in agricultural education in the universities practical work in farms. In addition, schools and colleges in the rural and semi-rural areas must encourage all

students—whatever may be their subjects of study—to devote a part of their normal scholastic routine to work on the land. For schools and colleges in cities and towns, I would suggest their adoption of villages where students may participate in a programme of complete reconstruction of village life. Last but not least, I would appeal to all Vice-Chancellors assembled here to infuse in their students a sense of the urgency about our food problem. I sincerely hope that they will urge both teachers and students to devote their intellectual and physical energies to the solution of this most pressing of our problems. I am confident that if we all make a serious and concerted effort, we can overcome our food shortage and place the Indian economy on a sound and healthy basis.

9

STANDARDS IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

I am glad to welcome you today to this conference. As you are aware, our object is to discuss problems of universities with special reference to the improvement of standards and co-ordination of facilities for higher education. It was my intention to call this conference in January but on account of pressure of work this could not be done.

The problem we have met to discuss is not new, though it has acquired a new urgency after the attainment of independence. You are all aware that for the last thirty years or more there have been presistent and at times well-founded criticisms of our universities. The great increase in the number of students has been accompanied by a fall in the standard of attainment. Ill-equipped and ill-trained graduates have increased the number of the unemployed. Their indiscipline and lack of purpose have added to our difficulties at a time when the attainment of independence has posed great problems of reconstruction and development before the country.

It was in order to examine the existing defects and make recommendations for the remodelling of university education in conformity with the needs of free India that the Radhakrishnan Commission was appointed in 1948. The Commission made a

*Speech at the conference of State Education Ministers and Vice-Chancellors of the Universities, New Delhi, April 18, 1953.

careful survey of the entire field and made recommendations for necessary changes in the academic, financial and administrative set-up of our universities in the new context. It redefined the aims and objects of university education and placed special emphasis on the establishment of proper relations between the universities on the one hand and the Central and State Governments on the other. One of its basic recommendations was for the creation of a machinery for the most economic utilisation of our existing resources by avoiding wastage or unnecessary duplication in the fields of higher study and research.

The problem of university education was also considered at the time when the Indian Constitution was being framed. There were detailed discussions as to whether university education should be made a Central or a State responsibility. The Radhakrishnan Commission had recommended that the "all-India aspects of university education, the repercussions and interchanges necessary and desirable between universities, and the need or a national guarantee of minimum standards of efficiency" require that university education should be a concurrent responsibility of the Centre and the States. The Commission had, in particular, mentioned that co-ordination of facilities in special subjects, the liaison between the universities and national research laboratories and scientific surveys, the adoption of national policies and the maintenance of standards of efficiency should be the special concern of the Government of India. That this view carried due weight in the framing of the Constitution may be seen from the inclusion of a specific item in the Constitution making co-ordination and maintenance of standards the exclusive responsibility of the Central Government. I am referring to entry 66 in List I of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution defining the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union Government, which reads as follows :—

> "Co-ordination and determination of standards of institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions."

The co-ordination of facilities in higher education and the maintenance of standards of university education is thus an exclusive Central responsibility. This makes it necessary for the Government of India to take an immediate and direct interest in

the affairs of all universities in order to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution are carried out. The Government has considered the matter carefully and reached the conclusion that this responsibility cannot be discharged without the creation of an agency which would enable the Government to carry out the necessary supervision and over-all guidance. Since this duty is an exclusive Central responsibility, the Government would have been entitled to set up, for these purposes, an official body composed of its own officers and nominees. The Government did not, however, do so. The Government recognises the value of university autonomy and desires that the necessary reforms in universities should, as far as possible, be initiated by the universities themselves. The Government is also of the view that in all such steps for the improvement of standards of higher education in the country, the co-operation of the States at every step is not only desirable but essential. It is on this account that the Government of India prepared a draft Bill entitled "Universities (Regulation of Standards) Bill." Before introducing it into Parliament the Government of India referred it to the State Governments and the universities for their advise and guidance.

I must confess that I have been somewhat surprised by the response of the universities to this gesture of co-operation by the Central Government. The Inter-University Board, in its Madras Session, has expressed itself against the Bill and raised doubts about its purpose and provisions. Nevertheless, the Board itself had to recognise the need of a machinery to effect co-ordination and improvement of standards. In view of this recognition, the suggestion that the draft Bill indicates a desire of the Government of India to interfere with the internal autonomy of the universities is quite unfounded, and it is difficult for me to understand the grounds for such suspicion. As I have already said, the Government could, if it so wished, introduce the Bill without referring to the universities. That it has not done so is itself evidence of the Government's regard for university autonomy. Further, the constitution of the body proposed in the Bill is such as to ensure that the autonomy of the universities will be respected. The Government could have proposed the appointment of a body under its own control to look into the affairs of the universities but, instead, the Government has proposed that it should be an autonomous body, set up by legislation, consisting of representatives

of universities and other distinguished educationists.

The statutory character of the body and the composition of its membership are in themselves evidence of the Government's desire that there should not be too much departmental interference with the internal affairs of the universities, while, at the same time, ensuring that proper standards are maintained and some of the glaring defects of university education removed. I am sure you will agree with me that if the Indian universities have today fallen into comparative disrepute, much of the responsibility lies with the universities themselves. Their administration has, in many cases, become slack and standards impaired through mainly non-academic causes, into the details of which I need not go. However, since the Inter-University Board has raised objections, I felt it desirable to summon a conference of Vice-Chancellors and Education Ministers and find out what they base their objections on. I need hardly add that I am always willing to consider any constructive suggestions they might make for the improvement of standards in universities and better co-ordination of their facilities.

I assume that we have met with a common objective, viz., the reform of university education, with a view to making the universities agencies of national regeneration in independent India. I have made a passing reference to the fact that universities do not today enjoy the public esteem accorded to them in the past. The reasons for this are many but two may be especially mentioned. One is the largely academic character of the instruction in the universities which, instead of developing the personality of the student and enabling him to make a place in society for himself, often converts him into a misfit who adds to the number of the unemployed, if not the unemployable. The other is that even the standards of academic education have fallen so much the persons who have reached the highest stage are not only ill-informed and ill-educated about the affairs of the world but are sometimes ignorant of the elementary things in their own fields of study. Inefficiency and corruption, which have also crept into some of the university administrations, have contributed to the public's loss of confidence in them.

While no one is more keenly conscious of the defects of the present position, I should, at the same time, like to say that I do not believe that a sweeping condemnation of the universities and university education is justified. Today, it has become almost a

fashion for everyone to get up and condemn all universities outright but they forget that if our universities have many defects, they have also many virtues. Nor can we forget that they have made a solid contribution to the achievement of Indian independence by awakening a new political consciousness among large numbers of their alumni.

I must also point out that not all the present defects of the universities are due to faults of the staff or the administration. Many of them are a direct outcome of the system which has been set up. The fact that a university degree is an indispensable condition for employment in most types of service has induced a rush for degrees and led to overcrowding in the universities. As a degree is regarded as a passport to any employment, some universities felt that they should not deny this passport to their students. There was thus a tendency to pass as many students as possible, if necessary even by lowering the standars. Once this downward trend began, it was difficult to check it, for any university which sought to maintain a high standard faced the risk of losing its students to other universities with lowered standards. The fact that degrees are essential pre-requisites for employment had an undesirable effect on students as well. It made them pay more attention to the passing of examinations than to the acquisition of knowledge.

On the other hand, the lack of adequate financial support for the universities leaves them with no option but to encourage the inflow into universities of as large a number of students as possible. In a situation where many of the universities derive a major portion of their income from the tuition and examination fees of students, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the university to exercise adequate control on the discipline and standaids of study of its students. I may tell you that the Government is aware of these problems and we are now considering various measures to ease the situation. In many countries the possession of a degree is not an essential condition for employment in government service. We are, therefore, also considering whether a change can be made in our present practice. A proposal is under examination that we should not insist on degrees for employment except only in specialised posts which require high academic qualifications. This can be done only if we are able to devise some alternative method of recruitment to different types and grades of public

service, which will be objective, flexible and free from the defects of the present system.

I have mentioned that one defect of the existing system of university education is its abstract and academic character. This. in itself, would not have been so serious a defect in a country with a different social background. University education must, in any case, involve a high degree of specialisation and abstraction. Unfortunately in India, this emphasis on the intellectual and academic aspect has been accompanied by the loss of manual skills, and, what is worse, a repugnance for various types of manual labour. Instead of recognising the dignity of labour, university students are often inclined to look down upon manual work. The Government of India have for a long time been in correspondence with the universities to devise measures to inculcate a sense of the dignity of labour among students and develop in them the habit of doing manual work. One suggestion which was sent for your consideration was to find out whether students could not be utilised for some of the work which is now performed by paid labour. There is also no reason why students should not help in the maintenance and repair of roads, gardens, furniture and some of the buildings of educational institutions. Colleges could also adopt a village, preferably one that is easy of access, and try to effect improvements in housing, sanitation, communications and education through the voluntary labour of students.

With the acceptance of the Five Year Plan in which a co-ordinated effort is being made to improve rural areas through community development projects, a field of activity has opened up where University students can render the greatest service to the country. I would suggest for your consideration that each university might undertake a project by which a selected rural area is adopted by the university and the university undertakes the responsibility of carrying out developmental programmes--educational as well as material—within that area I should be happy if you would consider this question also during your deliberations today and tomorrow and make specific proposals to the Government to this end. I may add that if the universities undertake any such programme of activities, the Government may be in a position to place small funds at the disposal of the Vice-Chancellors to enable them to set up an agency, which will plan, execute and supervise such activities.

I would also like you to consider carefully what exactly we mean by university autonomy. As I have said before, I am against any undue interference by the Government or any other body with the internal affairs of the universities. At the same time, I would like to say categorically that university autonomy is not an end in itself but a means to an end. That end is the achievement of satisfactory academic standards and the maintenance of the high dignity of the universities as seats of learning and culture. If, therefore, these ends are not fulfilled, the community has a right to demand such changes as will make their achievement possible. To resist measures for the purpose in the name of university autonomy is, therefore, totally unjustified. The universities do not exist in dignified isolation but are components of society and hence society has a right to determine what will be the character and aims of the university. The State, as the organised exclusive of the community, has therefore not only the right but the duty to ensure that the university fulfils those aims which society has a right to expect from them. The Government of India is aware of its responsibilities in this respect and is determined to discharge the duty it owes to the community.

What I have in mind will become clearer if we consider how the idea of academic freedom has developed. Our universities derive their traditions mainly from the British universities. You are aware that in a country which has party Government, there is a tendency for officials to change with the change of the party in power. Two Governor-Generals of India lost their office—one even before he could come out to India—on account of a change in the party Government in Britain. There was a risk that there might be similar interference with appointments in the universities. It is bad enough if officials change with a change in Government, but the position would be intolerable if learned and able teachers were dismissed to make room for incompetent and unqualified persons on political grounds. That is why, in course of time, a convention has grown up to give security to university teachers and see that the best men are placed in charge of the education of the future generations. University autonomy was, therefore, recognised in order to achieve academic freedom and higher educational standards. If there is a fall in academic standards, and the administration of the university becomes defective, you will surely agree that the plea of university autonomy cannot be used

as a defence against effecting the necessary reforms.

We are today passing through an age when old traditions are crumbling and new values have to be built up in their place. The old order has passed but a new order is not yet born. The happiness and prosperity of millions demand that this revolutionary reconstruction of society should be carried out not by violent or disruptive methods but through a process of legislation and planned change. Obviously, the universities must play an important role in initiating such changes and serve as agencies for the creation of new ideals and the training up of workers in their cause. This, however, requires the reform and regeneration of the universities themselves in order to enable them to carry out this momentous task. The creation of a strong agency which will jealously guard their standards and co-ordinate their resources and facilities is essential if the universities are to regain their old prestige and become centres of a new national awakening. We have met today to find out the best method of doing so, and I have every hope that before we disperse we will have arrived at an agreed solution of one of the most pressing problems facing higher education in the country.

10

EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

It is for me a great pleasure to associate myself with the formal opening of the Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur.

When I assumed charge of the Ministry of Education in 1947, I felt that of the many tasks of educational reconstruction that faced the country, two were of paramount urgency. The first was the creation of a nation-wide system of Basic Education for all children of school-going age, and the second the provision of facilities of the highest type of education in the technical field. You are aware that the prevailing system of education in the country has been mainly literary and academic. It has not applied us with the high level scientific and technical personnel that is necessary to develop our economic and material resources, and improve the standard of life of our peoples. For such education we have had to send our students abroad, and from various points of view this has never been and cannot be fully satisfactory.

One of the first decisions I took on assuming charge was that we must so improve the facilities for higher technical education in the country, that we could ourselves meet most of our needs. The large number of our young men who had been going abroad for higher training could have received such training in the country itself. Indeed, I looked and still look forward to the day when the

*Opening address at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, August 18, 1951.

facilities for technical education in India will be of such a level that people from abroad will come to India for higher scientific and technical training.

The Government of India had already before them a scheme for the establishment of four institutions of the standard of the Massachussets Institute of Technology. I felt that whatever the financial and other obstacles, we must go ahead with the implementation of that scheme. The first item in that programme was the establishment of the Eastern Institute near Calcutta, and I am happy that inspite of the tremendous difficulties we have had to face in the last four years, we are able to participate in the opening of the Institute today. I would here like to place on record my deep appreciation of the generous help we have received from the Government of West Bengal who have given to the Institute, free of cost, a magnificent plot of some 1200 acres, and this fine building.

It has been clear to me from the very beginning that this institute must provide instruction of the highest standard, under the supervision of recognised authorities in their respective fields. We have intended that only men of the highest quality should be in-charge of the different departments, and we have not hesitated even to go outside India to recruit professors wherever necessary. We have also felt that there is no point in providing specialised courses merely because such courses exist elsewhere, but those courses should be provided only if a clear need for their provision is felt. We have, therefore, decided that facilities in different subjects will be made available at the Institute only when we are satisfied that :

(a) properly qualified and experienced personnel has been secured to run the course, and
(b) that the industrial and technical development of the country need the provision of such a course.

As I have said earlier, these higher technical institutes are intended to fill important gaps in the provision of facilities for higher technical education. Pending the establishment of such institutes, we have sought to fill some of these gaps by improving the facilities available in the existing institutions. On the recommendation of the All India Council for Technical Education, a

scheme for the strengthening and improvement of fourteen engineering and technological institutions situated in different parts of the country has been sanctioned and is now in the third year of its operation. This scheme will cost approximately Rs. 1.5 crore. The Government have also sanctioned large amounts for the development of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Now that the Indian Institute of Technology has been established, fresh encouragement will be given to the improvement of technical education throughout the country. The Institute will provide post-graduate and research facilities which can be utilised properly only if a sufficient number of graduates in engineering and technology of a sufficiently high quality are forthcoming to take advantage of the facilities offered. This aspect of the question is constantly in our minds and I can assure you that the Government will continue to take a deep interest in the all-round development of facilities of technical education throughout the country.

The Institute which is being inaugurated today will have provision for the teaching of 2,000 students at the under-graduate level, and 1,000 students for post-graduate study and research. These students will be drawn from all over the country, and their close association in a fellowship of study and research in some of the most formative years of their life will, we earnestly hope, develop in them a consciousness of their common Indian nationality and culture. The Institute's main function is, no doubt, to provide facilities for training high-grade engineers and technologies, but this function, you will appreciate cannot be adequately performed without the provision of facilities for research as well. We are beginning today with only a little over two hundred under-graduates and a few research students, but I can clearly visualise the day when the great potentialities of this Institute will be fully realised.

In order to ensure that the Institute serves the needs of the country in the most effective manner, the courses in the Institute will be planned on the advice of experts drawn from industry, government departments, other employing agencies and educational authorities. In fact, this close association between academic experts and practical administrators is essential for the proper development of an institution of this type. I would like to make a special appeal to our industrial and business magnates to take an active interest in the development of this Institute. They can help

in many ways. Industry can assist financially by establishing Chairs in subjects in which it is especially interested. Such assistance would make it possible to have professors, where necessary, more than one, in subjects which are important from the point of view of the development of Industry. I have no doubt that industrialists will also help to make the training in this Institute more practical and concrete by permitting students to visit workshops and factories and allowing them to go through organised courses of practical training in the industry. It will improve the quality of teaching in the Institute, and in the end help the industrialists themselves, if staff members of the Institute are offered facilities for the study of industrial techniques. Promising employees should also be seconded to the Institute to undertake programmes of research or courses at the post-graduate level. Last but not the least, industrial magnates can help by deputing engineers, technologists and administrators in their concerns to deliver lectures or courses of lectures at the Institute.

Though situated in one corner of India, this Institute is intended to cater for the needs of the country as a whole. We have been able to recruit very distinguished men to take charge as professors in the different departments, and we are happy that a scientist of the calibre of Dr. J.C. Ghosh is its first Director. I have no doubt that they will devote themselves to building this institution on sound foundations so that it may take its place among the finest institutions of its kind not only in India but in the world.

Before I conclude, I must refer to the services of the late Sir Ardshir Dalal, who as the Member for Planning and Development of the then Government of India, mooted the idea of this Institute and Sri Nalini Ranjan Sarkar who was the Chairman of the Committee that drew up the first plan for its establishment.

11

PROGRAMME FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

It was but natural that after the attainment of freedom we should have considered ambitious programmes for the expansion of our national education. This was necessary as education is one of the most important of our nation-building activities. We had also to make special efforts to wipe out the deficiency in education created by over a hundred years of foreign rule. It was in this spirit that the Minister of Education prepared a programme of work for the next ten years.

It was obvious that we had to build our educational structure from its very basis and improve it both qualitatively and quantitatively. The number of our literates was and is lamentably low. Even the literacy that is imparted is not of the highest quality. In view of the demand for an all-round expansion and improvement, it became necessary to fix an order of priorities, so that our limited resources were not frittered away in attempting too many things simultaneously. You will remember that it was with this object in view that the Ministry of Education, with your general support, proposed that our immediate objectives should be four, namely :

(i) the provision of basic education on a universal, free and

*Address at the Central Advisory Board of Education, Cuttack January 8, 1950.

compulsory basis for all our school-going children;

(ii) the provision of adult education in order to wipe out the colossal illiteracy of our masses;

(iii) the improvement and expansion of technical education in order to solve the problem of manpower for industrial and technical development; and

(iv) the reorganisation and improvement of university education from a national point of view.

The Post-War Development Plan laid down that would take 40 years to implement a scheme of basic education and cost the nation a sum of Rs. 8,000 crore at the rate of about Rs. 200 crore a year. You will remember that after the attainment of independence we all felt that the period was too long and exigencies of our national economy demanded a reduction in the cost. Nor was this all. We realised that lack of finance was not the only obstacle in our way. A truly national system of education demanded the creation of a new spirit among our educated men and women, so that they would regard the spread of education as a national obligation for all. The question of buildings had also to be faced from a new angle, for if we waited for the construction programme envisaged in the Post-War Plan, the introduction of compulsory, universal and free education would be deferred indefinitely. We, therefore, felt that we must utilise whatever accommodation was available in the land and employ the entire educated personnel of the land either on a voluntary basis or through some form of social conscription. It was with this end in view that we prepared a plan of junior basic education to be implemented in ten years and at a greatly reduced cost.

In the field of adult education, we revised our programme so that it became one of social education for training in citizenship and aimed at making at least 50 per cent of illiterate adults literate in the course of the next ten years.

You considered these reports last year and generally approved of the recommendations. I agree with your views and feel that in the light of the modifications suggested, we may prepare our programmes on the basis of co-operation between the State and the people, so that the state map extend the necessary facilities and services on the one hand and the people on the other supplement

on a voluntary basis the efforts of the State.

To improve our standards of technical education, the programme that we had envisaged was the establishment of four higher technological institutes in addition to the strengthening of existing institutions. Considerations of finance did not permit us to start with all the four, but we thought that at least a beginning should be made. The Eastern Higher Technological Institute near Calcutta was taken in hand without even waiting for the construction of all the necessary buildings. The scheme is in progress and I hope that the next academic year will see the first batch of teachers and students working in this Institute. Simultaneously, it has been our aim to strengthen the existing institutions by improving their quality and increasing their capacity.

In the field of university education, the Indian University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Professor Radhakrishnan was asked to submit its report within nine months. You will be glad to know that it has already done so. The Report is before you and one of the main functions of this meeting of the Board will be to consider the recommendations of the Commission.

I have even at the risk of some repetition recapitulated these points, so that we may be in a position to judge where we are. You will appreciate that so far as planning is concerned, the Ministry is ready with its programme in all the four fields mentioned by me. I would, therefore, like to draw your attention to the obstacle which stands in the way of their immediate implementation.

You will remember that in 1947 the problem of refugees from Western Pakistan absorbed almost all the energy and a major portion of the finances of the nation. There was, therefore, no hope of adequate funds being available for educational expansion in the immediate future, but inspite of these difficulties, the budget for 1948-49 saw an increase in provision for education. During 1948-49, our scheme for educational reconstruction reached a suitable stage for implementation. It was my hope that the 1949-50 budget would enable us to make a beginning with the programme.

To our great disappointments even the expectation is now belied. Within six months of the adoption of this year's budget, we have had to face a financial crisis of such magnitude as to

force a reduction of ten to twenty per cent in the already approved budgets. This was followed by devaluation and still further difficulties with the result that our current year's budget has been severely curtailed. Instead of going ahead as we had originally planned, we suddenly realised that we had to retreat. For 1949-50, we had to surrender about Rs. 153 lakh out of a total budget of about Rs. 588 lakh. The result is that a country with a population of almost 350 millions and with hardly 14 per cent literates cannot provide more than Rs. 4.5 crore from its Central revenues for education !

The problem before us today is not what schemes we should prepare for national education. These are already there. We have to consider whether we can take any forward step at all in the immediate future. It is true that education is a Provincial subject, but, in the existing circumstances, the problem of education cannot be solved unless the Centre assumes appropriate responsibility for its expansion and growth. We are as keenly conscious of this as all of you and this makes the present situation even more painful to us. There are no two opinions about the need for the provision of education on an expanded and improved scale. The programmes are also ready, but, inspite of the urgency, we cannot go ahead because of the shortage of funds.

I may bring to your notice the policy which the British Government have adopted in a similar situation. In a recent circular, the Ministry of Education of that Government have said :

> "Local education authorities will be aware that the economic difficulties of the country have called for a close review of Government expenditure. They will also have noted the announcements that the Government do not contemplate any major change in policy which would result in a reduction in the scope of the service or which the Minister of Education is responsible."

The Minister which to make it clear in particular that :

(a) there is to be no going back on reforms already instituted or on the plans by which the number of teachers in primary and secondary schools will be increased with

the increasing school population;

(b) there is to be no cut in the extent of the building programmes already approved to meet the increasing number of children, the needs of new housing estates and of technical education. Every, effort, however, must be made to reduce costs. A separate circular is being sent to the authorities on these points and on the measures which have to be taken to reduce capital investment for other educational purposes;

(c) schemes for further education, including plans for country colleges, not yet completed should be proceed with and submitted in due course;

(d) arrangements for maintaining an adequate number of university awards should proceed concurrently with termination of the Further Education and Training Scheme, and discussions between universities and local education authorities on the adoption of a new procedure for local awards based on paragraph 34 of the Working Party's Report should continue.

There is, however, no point in merely discussion these difficulties and obstacles. What we have to do is to devise ways and means so that funds may be found for education and other constructive projects. There is no immediate prospect of a large increase in our revenues. Funds can therefore be found only by diverting a larger proportion of our available resources to education and other nation-building activities. As you are aware, the main burden on our finance today is due to the expenditure on the import of food, the rehabilitation of refugees and defence. It is obvious that welfare services cannot be expanded till those burdens are lightended. There is every hope that the expenses on the food account will be diminished and ultimately disappear. The expenditure for rehabilitation cannot be curtailed till our displaced people have been re-established on a sound basis, but it is diminishing with the flux of time. There remains Defence. During the British regime, we have always complained that the Defence expenditure was excessive. After the attainment of freedom, it was, therefore, natural to expect savings in this field, but circumstances took a turn, where inspite of our efforts, the expenditure on Defence had to be further increased. The

Government are, however, keenly alive to the situation and I can assure you that we are examining every possible avenue of saving and economy.

The need for education is accepted in principle by every one. It is necessary to wipe out the illiteracy of 150 years and make our people efficient, productive and responsible citizens of a democratic State. The new Constitution gives power to the people, but if this power is to be exercised with wisdom and foresight, it is necessary that the people must have the requisite knowledge. Even from the point of view of increasing the economic and industrial efficiency of the people, it is essential that our educational facilities must be expanded. As a famous economist has said, there are no poor or rich countries but only countries in which the people use their resources and countries in which they do not. Some parts of Africa are among the richest in the world in natural resources and yet because the people are illiterate and ignorant, they are poor and suppressed. There are other parts of the world, poor in natural resources, which have been developed and enriched through the knowledge and industry of their people. India will have to decide to which category her people should belong.

12

EDUCATION OF YOUTH*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

We have as one of the items for discussion today a problem which raises fundamental issues of law and justice. Till now, the State has looked upon an offence as a crime for which the offender must expiate. Such offences, whether you call them crimes or sins, were regarded as evil and attracted as their inevitable consequence, punishment. Punishment was, therefore, regarded as a consequence of crime and justified in itself. The classic exposition of this view is in the principle "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

Later ages, however, raised the question of the utility or justification of punishment. Critics arose who asked how a murdered person benefited by the slaughter of his murderer. In fact, the only result was the loss of life of two individuals instead of one. Punishment was therefore sought to be justified on grounds of its deterrent character, but even this did not satisfy critics who pointed out that, as a matter of fact, punishment did not deter. A new school of thought arose, which approached the problem of punishment from the point of view of reform of the offender. Instead of a retributive theory of punishment, we thus find the emergence of an educative and reformatory theory of punishment.

*Speech delivered at the Provincial Education Ministers' Conference, New Delhi, August 19, 1949,

This dispute between the different theories of punishment has not yet been settled, but on one point there is almost ananimous agreement among both theories and practical men of affairs. All are agreed that in the case of juveniles there must be a change of outlook with regard to punishment. For one thing, young persons, without maturity of judgment, cannot be held fully responsible for their actions. For another, experience has shown that confinement of such juveniles in jails confirms them into criminals. In fact, children who may have committed some crime through want of knowledge or on the impulse of the moment, become habitual criminals if they are once sent to jail.

Recognition of this fact has led many countries to provide separate establishments for juveniles. In India, we have had reformatories and houses of correction in different provinces, but it must be admitted that even there have not fully met the purpose. The provision of such reformatories or juvenile jails has, no doubt, separated the juvenile offenders from the confirmed criminals, but as they themselves have been miniature jails, the educative and reformatory aspect has not found a proper emphasis.

Apart from the inadequacy of existing institutions in India, we have to recognise the fact that their development in the different provinces has been unequal. Bombay, which has gone farthest in the matter, passed its Children's Act in 1924 and revised it in 1948. It has 17 Remand Homes and uses a large number of Probation Officers to look after juvenile delinquents. Thirty-two such officers have been appointed by the Government in addition to 150 working on a voluntary basis and seven appointed by non-official bodies. Bombay has 28 Certified Schools and 12 Associations which attend to the after-care of the children. No other province has gone so far, though Madras, under its Children's Act of 1920, has set up five Juvenile Courts and six Certified Schools. The C.P. passed an Act in 1928 and has 32 Probation Officers and one Certified School. West Bengal has a Children's Act, passed in 1922, and recently the West Bengal Government has initiated action to change the character of administration in respect of juvenile crime. East Punjab has an Act before the Assembly, while the U.P. Government are drafting a Bill for the purpose. We have no information of such Bills in either Assam, Bihar or Orissa.

The position with regard to the care and management of

juvenile delinquents is thus obviously unsatisfactory. In the first place, not at all the provinces that have Children's Acts on their statute-books are working them adequately. The work is chiefly confined to bigger cities and even there it leaves much to be desired. The Probation Officers have not the requisite training; nor have the magistrates of the Juvenile Courts the required qualifications. The Certified Schools are not working properly and after-care is all but non-existent.

A little consideration will show that in a matter like the problem of juvenile delinquency and the proper methods of dealing with it, there must be uniformity among the different provinces. It is also desirable that the practice of this country should conform, as far as possible, to that of other enlightened countries of the world. In the U.K., the persons between the age of 8 and 17 are regarded as juveniles and are tried by special Juvenile Courts. Panels of magistrates are selected from Justices of Peace and, according to present regulations, these panels consist of two or three persons selected every three years. In metropolitan courts one of the magistrates must be a woman, while outside London this practice is observed as far as possible. The administration of the courts is under the Home Officer, but Special Advisory Committees were set up in 1910 in order to make the attitude of the adminstration more progressive. In the past, punishment for the juvenile delinquents was in proportion to the gravity of the offences but in recent times, the trend is towards the reclamation of the future citizen rather than the punishment of an offender.

The change-over from punishment to education is almost complete in the U.S.A. and in some of the European countries. In the U.S.A., the upper age-limit for juvenile delinquents is 21. Upto the age of 18, the offender is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Juvenile Courts, but from 18 to 21 these courts exercise a concurrent jurisdiction with the ordinary courts. The trend of legislation is to make the Juvenile Courts independent of the ordinary system of criminal justice. In addition to the special magistrates, the U.S.A. provides for referees to assist in the hearing and disposition of the cases. Where the delinquent is a girl, it is the practice to associate a properly qualified woman referee with the Court. The U.S.A. has no advisory bodies, perhaps because social service agencies play an important part in all cases before the Juvenile Courts.

One feature which is common to both the U.K. and the U.S.A. is the effort to retain the child in his or her own surroundings. The U.S.A. has the largest provision for institutional care, but even there the trend of theory is away from institutional care to the education of the delinquent in his or her own home atmosphere. The following table gives an idea of the results of the disposition of cases in the Juvenile Courts in the U.K. and the U.S.A. :

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>U.K.</th><th>U.S.A.</th></tr>
<tr><td>Put on probation</td><td>51%</td><td>43%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Discharged after charge proved or bound over with supervision</td><td>32%</td><td>29%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Committed to schools</td><td>9%</td><td>16%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fined</td><td>6%</td><td>6%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Probation to non-official persons</td><td rowspan="3">2%</td><td>2%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Placement with board department or agency</td><td>3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other care</td><td>1%</td></tr>
</table>

The examples of the U.K. and the U.S.A. therefore indicate that the most progressive opinion in the world today favours that the juvenile offender must be regarded as a subject for education rather than punishment, and where it is necessary to send him to a reformatory, the character of such juvenile institutions must change. They should be educational institutions in the best sense of the term and not "houses of correction or penalty." These progressive countries have also found by experience that the best method of dealing with juvenile delinquents is to provide for their instruction without removing them from their homes. This requires a close co-operation with their families.

As I have already stated, there must be uniformity among the provinces with regard to measures for dealing with juvenile delinquency. It seems that this can best be achieved by means of central legislation with an enabling clause which will permit provinces to make such minor modifications as may be necessary. Notice of a private member's bill for dealing with some aspects of juvenile delinquency has already been given by Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh and is likely to come up during the next legislative session of the Constituent Asssembly. After this Conference has decided on the main lines which such legislation should take, one of the two procedures may be followed. Either we may accept

Dr. Deshmukh's bill with such modifications as may be necessary or, in the alternative, we may introduce a more comprehensive bill as a government measure.

I will briefly mention some of the points for consideration in this context. I have already referred to the fact that the trend of progressive opinion in Western countries favours the retention of juvenile delinquents in their homes. We have to consider whether in the prevailing condition in India, juvenile will benefit more by being trained at home or by receiving instruction in special hostels established for the purpose.

Another point which the Conference will have to consider is the question of institutions dealing with juvenile delinquency. While Juvenile Courts may remain in the administrative charge of Home Department assited by the Education Department, it appears to me that the homes and schools for the juvenile delinquents must be directly administered by the Department of Education itself.

The Conference should also advise on the nature of instruction to be provided in such schools and homes. It is obvious that in addition to instruction in letters, there must also be a provision for training in some craft or trade. The provision of moral instructions seems to me to be equally important. This need not be narrow or sectarian, but wide ethical teaching of a universal type that will help in building up the character of the inmates.

The final point for consideration is the question of setting up an Advisory Committee in every province. These committees should be small and compact and should include Education Ministers, representatives of the Law and Home Departments and some social workers.

The second big problem before the Conference is the question of the medium of instruction at different stages of school education. The basic principle in this matter is not in dispute. The claims of the mother tongue are accepted by all but inspite of this, there are complaints that this principle is not always observed in practice. On the contrary, a language other than the mother tongue is sought to be imposed on the minorities.

India is a vast country with many languages. We must accept unreservedly that all these languages are Indian languages and deserve the same treatment. Where a province is linguistically homogenous, there is no difficulty in acting on this principle, but

even where the languages transcend provincial barriers, this should not affect our attitude to the problem. Since all the languages are Indian languages, what objection can there be if a minority in a particular province speaks or learns a language other than that of the majority ? One thing is certain. Even if our aim is unity, it cannot be achieved by compulsion or imposition. Experience has shown that the only way to achieve unity in cultural or linguistic matters is to accept the existing differences. Any attempt to iron out the differences only leads to greater conflict and bitterness.

A constructive approach to the problem cannot but lead to an amicable settlement. It is, therefore, a matter for gratification that the C.A.B. of Education, which is representatives of all the provinces, has decided unanimously that primary instruction should, provided there is the minimum number of pupils available, be invariably given in the mother tongue, and that even in the secondary stage, instruction should be provided in the mother tongues if a sufficient number so desire. It is obvious that the mother tongue of the pupil means the language which is described as such by the guardian of the pupil. How can any one, except the parents, decide what is the mother tongue of the child ?

The conflict is not about the principle but about its application to concrete cases. Recently, the Congress Working Committee discussed the problem in all its aspects and, after a thorough examination of all the issues involved, passed a resolution which you have no doubt seen. I am myself convinced that the attitude adopted by the Working Committee is the right one, and I hope that you will be of the same opinion and approach this problem with clear vision and without any mental reservations. I am sure that if this is done, all causes for grievance will be removed. We can then solve this problem once and for all, so that there may be no future complaints from any minority.

A satisfactory solution of the problem of languages is more important in the context of our newly-won freedom. We have only now achieved our freedom and it is essential that every effort must be made to develop a sense of solidarity among the nation. If we allow grievances to grow our basic things like the question of the mother tongue, I am afraid that the consequences will affect all aspects of our national life. I need hardly stress this point before you as you are equally alive to the necessity of a

satisfactory settlement of this question. I would only appeal to you that we should approach this question with large-hearted generosity and try to meet the wishes of the minorities in a manner which will leave no ground for dissatisfaction or complaint.

13

RESEARCH IN EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Immediately after I assumed charge of the Ministry of Education in January 1947, I looked into the development projects which has been accepted in principle but not carried out in practice. Of these, one of the most outstanding was the scheme for a Central College of Training for Teachers. The Central Advisory Board of Education had, in 1944, recommended the establishment of two training colleges—one foi men and the other for women, each providing for an intake of 200 students for the service of the Centrally Administered Areas and the smaller provinces and states. On grounds of economy the Government of India modified that recommendation and decided to establish one college for both men and women, with a capacity of 300. Provision was accordingly made in the budget of 1946-47 for the establishment of the college.

When I took office, I was, therefore, surprised to find that the whole programme had been held up on the ground of shortage of building materials. I was aware of the difficulties in securing steel and cement and other equipment and I could understand the delay in the implementation of the building programme. I could not, however, understand why this led to a postponement of the entire scheme. Even if buildings were lacking, the institute could

*Speech delivered at the laying of the foundation of the Central Institute of Education by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Delhi, April 18, 1949.

have been started in temporary structures or hired houses, but here, as in so many other cases, programmes of educational development were held up on the ground of lack of accommodation. This undue stress upon buildings has always seemed to me to be an instance of confusing ends with means. Buildings are only a means of which the end is education, and yet it seemed to me that many of our educational planners were so engrossed with building projects that they could not conceive of carrying on educational work in their absence. I, therefore, decided forthwith that the institution must be started immediately with whatever accommodation was readily available.

The period was an exceedingly difficult one and all the attention of the Government was concentrated first on the disturbances in the Punjab and later on the impending division of the country. Even then, a small house was secured in the Delhi University area in July 1947. I realised that this was not adequate for our needs and the work of the institute even on the smallest scale could be carried out only by the additional accommodation provided in tents. In spite of our anxiety to get the institute working, a further period of delay was enforced by the division of the country and the extension of disturbances of Delhi itself, and for several months all normal activities had to be totally suspended. As soon, however, as the situation was brought under control, on the 19th of December, 1947, the Central Institute of Education was formally opened by Lady Mountbatten and it started to work in one hired building and several tents.

It is hardly necessary for me to relate at length the importance of an institute of this kind. With literacy figures so low as only 15 per cent, the paramount importance of expanding the facilities of education is obvious. The acceptance of democracy as the pattern of our State has, if anything, added to the urgency of the problem. It is also self-evident that the first step towards expanding the facilities of education is to provide for an increase in the number of trained teachers. Equally necessary is an institution to assess the results of educational methods followed till now and devise improvements, demanded in the changing circumstances of today.

It will be noticed that the institution, which was started in December 1947, was the Central Institute of Education and not the training colleges which had originally been planned in 1944

and 1945. This meant not merely a change in nomenclature, but a considerable expansion in the purpose and functions of the institution. I felt that changes were necessary in two directions. First, it should not be merely a college for training teachers but also an institution for research in the fields of education. Secondly, its services should not be restricted to the Centrally Administered Areas but should extend to the whole of India.

The Central Institute will, therefore, both train teachers for higher and secondary schools and also carry on research on the problems of basic and secondary education. The stage at which a child should be introduced to a craft as distinct from activity, the relative emphasis on craft and academic subjects and their correlation, the production of a new type of school literature to bring out the social functions of all human activity, the degree of abstraction possible in the earlier stages of education, the stage at which there may be some bifurcation between academic subjects and crafts, the grouping of children according to aptitude, taste and ability, the place of art in the school curriculum—these are only a few of the many problems which arise out of a new conception of basic education and require constant and careful study in a research institution.

There are also problems relating to adult education which demand fresh and careful scrutiny. It is a commonplace that the methods which are suitable for children cannot without modification be applied to adults. No doubt, a good deal of work in this connection has been done in other countries of the world but each country has its own peculiar problems arising out of its social and economic background and its political history. We will have to devise the quickest methods of liquidating adult illiteracy. Equally important is the maintenance of a continued service of literature to prevent relapse into illiteracy. Thus alone can we provide adult literates with the knowledge to discharge their functions as citizens of a democratic state.

I could go on referring to many other problems which require immediate attention if we are to make our education truly creative. The system of examination, is itself being studied all over the world. The problem of textbooks which will provide useful and interesting information and at the same time develop a truly human outlook on world affairs is also engaging the attention of many countries. The aim and purpose of secondary education

also require a re-examination. It is my hope that the Central Institute of Education will be our laboratory for examining all these important questions under controlled conditions and offering suggestions as to the best methods for their solution.

I have already stated that we did not allow the lack of buildings to delay the starting of the institution and I am glad that, in spite of these difficulties, the institution has made good progress. Nevertheless, I felt that now that the Institute has started to work, we must provide suitable buildings for it as soon as possible. When the plans were made in 1945, the estimated expenditure for buildings was Rs. 18 lakh, but the sharp rise in the cost of construction is bound to lead to an increase in expenditure. I am, however, glad that, notwithstanding the difficulties, we are today in a position to take in hand the building programme of the Institute and I hope that it will, in the near future, have all the buildings it needs.

A library of over 5,000 books has been built up at a cost of approximately forty thousand rupees. We are hoping that when completed, the Institute Library will be comparable with similar research libraries elsewhere. I am also hoping that we shall, in the course of the next year or so, attach to the Institute a Psychological Section to carry out experiments in aptitude tests, selection methods, vocational guidance and other services.

We are conscious that only a beginning has been made and all that we propose and hope to accomplish is still in the realm of the future. Foundations truly laid are, however, a guarantee of future success, and no one, Mr. Prime Minister, is more aware than yourself of the need of imaginative planning and bold execution in order to achieve our objects. It is for this reason that we requested you to lay the foundation of this Institute, so that this new institution may, from its very inception, be inspired by that broad humanism and width of culture which have distinguished your actions in public and private life. I have, Mr. Prime Minister, great pleasure in requesting you to lay the foundation-stone of this Institute.

14

PUBLIC SCHOOL*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

I am very glad of this opportunity of visiting the Scindia School at Gwalior founded fifty years ago by the late Maharaja of Gwalior, Sir Madhava Rao Scindia. The manner in which the School has developed since then and established for itself an all India position is eloquent testimony to the interest taken by him and his successors. I am confident Your Highness will continue to take the same interest in its future growth and development.

A good school is a national asset of the highest value at any place or at any time. Schools are the laboratories which produce the future citizens of a State. The quality of the State, therefore, depends upon the quality of such laboratories. In the context of modern India the importance of good schools is even greater. On the one hand, we have vast illiteracy and on the other, almost unbounded opportunities. The achievement of independence has opened to the people new vistas and we can achieve all that we have hoped for, provided the human material in the country can meet the challenge demanded of them. Inspite of the vastness of our resources and opportunities, it is an unfortunate fact that the number of good schools in this country is all too rare. The obligation of a school like the Scindia is, therefore, all the greater.

*Speech at the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the Scindia School, Gwalior, February 26, 1949.

I have been very glad to learn of the manner in which the Scindia School has grown through a synthesis of Indian and British traditions. You have in this school rightly proved that there is in this country an ancient tradition of residential schools which shared many features in common with the modern Public Schools. You have, as is only right and proper, taken from the English Public School system whatever was good in it but you have grafted it on what is basically an Indian Institution. A school like yours, in which equal emphasis is placed on academic work, physical and health organisation, creative activity and training in responsibility and integrated behaviour, can serve a most useful purpose in the present transitional phase of Indian life. I am particularly glad to see that, apart from the emphasis of the usual Public School activities found in British schools, you have made provisions for the development of the spiritual aspect of the boys in your charge.

It was perhaps inevitable that when the School started, it was meant to be exclusive and had a distinct military bias for a considerable time. I am glad that you have given up that exclusiveness and turned the School into an all-India Public School drawing boys from all parts of India and from all major social and religious groups. This is a move in the right direction and is in keeping with the spirit of the times. If there is any one feature which distinguishes modern India, it is the growth of the spirit of democracy which seeks to give equality of opportunity to all its citizens. All past barriers based on birth, privilege, caste or wealth are breaking down. As a secular democratic State, we are pledged to the widening of opportunities and equality of chances for all. I am very glad to learn that your Highness has taken a leading part in the breaking down of such barriers. I am confident that the same wise statesmanship will guide you in widening still further the services which the Scindia School can offer to the rising generations of free India.

In the past, exclusive schools like yours served two main purposes. They were established either to cater for the needs of princely families or they were founded by European to offer education according to European models. Whatever opinion we may have about their exclusive character, it cannot be denied that they rendered a great service in introducing education of the British Public School type to India. This system of residential

education with its emphasis on the growth of character and leadership has much to offer to India, and both types of schools to which I have referred deserve well of the country, having brought the benefits of this system to young Indians.

This is the reason why after the attainment of independence, the Ministry of Education in considering the future of such schools decided that with certain changes they could render great service to free India. After the 15th of August 1947, there was no longer any room for schools of an exclusive type, but once their exclusive character was removed, the former Chiefs' Schools and European Schools could be fitted into our scheme of National Education. Not only so, their special characteristics in developing discipline and corporate life make such schools more necessary for training the future leaders of independence India. The Ministry of Education have therefore decided to put under their direct supervision both schools like the Chiefs' College at Ajmer or Raipur and the European Schools like those at Lovedale and Sanawar associated with the name of Sir Henry Lawrence. Their exclusive character has been removed and their doors thrown open to all without regard to birth, status or province. They have thus become for the first time Public Schools in the real sense of the term. I am glad to find that here at Gwalior you have developed along the same lines and converted your school into an all-India school which is open to all without distinction.

I am glad to find so many distinguished representatives of the princely order of India present here. May I take this opportunity of saying how greatly I have appreciated the manner in which you have helped in breaking down the barrier between what were the provinces and the states during the British days ? By your action in breaking these barriers and bringing your states within the orbit of the Indian Union, you have acted wisely and well. You have also acted wisely and well in transferring power to the hands of representative bodies and thus placing the administration on a level with that of the rest of India. These are great services and I am sure that the country appreciates the spirit in which you have rendered them,

There remains, however, one question that I would ask of you. Till yesterday you were rulers; today you have given up the reins of power. Do you feel that by giving up power in the manner, you have still a function to perform on the stage of

modern India ? Some of you may feel that now that administration is in the hands of popular bodies, you have nothing further to do. Such a feeling is, to my mind, unjustified, for there is one function you can perform that no one can take from you. You will agree with me that just as a ruler has power over his people, he has also the opportunity of serving them. His power may disappear but no one can take away his capacity for service. You have acted wisely in responding to the challenge of the changed times and divesting yourselves of your administratve work. You will act even more wisely if you train yourselves to serve the country in keeping with the spirit of the new age, and I can assure you that should you decide to do so, you will have in future India a position even more exalted than the one you had occupied in the past. For, in the past, your position was based on power and fear; in the future, your position will be built on service and love.

We are living today in an age of democracy. There are men who think that there is no scope of aristocracy in such a context. This is, however, not my opinion. When aristocracy is opposed to democracy, it may be cast aside by the present age, but when aristocracy serves as an adjunct to democracy and seeks to fulfil its purposes, aristocracy can render a service to democracy which nothing else can. Aristocracy develops a width of vision and a far-reaching imagination which is not usually found outside its orbit. Such vision and imagination cannot be acquired by training in a school. Book learning is no substitute for the vision which develops from generation to generation. Your family traditions and the art of leadership which you have developed through the training of generations can therefore help in supplying qualities which we need to build the India of our dreams. My appeal to you is therefore to rise to the occasion and prepare yourselves in a spirit of service in order to take your right place in the growth and development of free India.

15

SOCIAL EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Some time ago I made an announcement that a section of Social Education has been opened in the Ministry of Education. This Section is concerned with the preparation of plans for imparting social education to the Indian people. With the introduction of adult franchise the necessity of such education has become even more pressing than before. It is necessary that I should explain to the public the scope and purpose of the programme that we have taken in hand.

There is at present a great deal of confusion about the meaning of the terms Social Education, Social Welfare and Adult Education. In order to remove this the concept of social education must be clearly defined so that we may go ahead with the programmes that have been accepted in this Ministry.

At the outset, let me make it clear that social education is not merely a study of Sociology, Sociology is the science of social phenomena and in its wider meaning covers advanced studies like Economics, Politics, Anthropology, Jurisprudence, etc. Sociology is a branch of theoretic knowledge which systematises a certain type of facts and tries to establish the laws of social inter-actions, relations and developments. By social education is meant something which has an immediately practical bearing.

*Press Conference, May 31, 1948,

Nor is social education synonymous with social welfare. Social welfare is primarily an activity directed towards the removal of the many disabilities and evils from which individuals or groups suffer under existing social conditions; thus, the provision of amenities for labour class population or work among drug addicts or attempts to enforce social hygiene are examples of social welfare work. Social education may lead to such activities but must not be confused with them.

Social education may therefore be defined as a course of study towards the production of a consciousness of citizenship among the people and the promotion of social solidarity among them. For this, it is obvious that there must be some knowledge of social condition, but it is not necessary to have detailed acquaintance with sociological laws which the study of Economics or Politics requires. Its affinity with adult education is more immediate. We may say that adult education has three aspects, namely, (a) the induction of literacy among grown-up illiterates, (b) the production of an educated mind in the masses in the absence of literary education, (c) the inculcation of a lively sense of rights and duties of citizenship, both as individuals and as members of a mighty nation. We may say that social education is synonymous with adult education, but lays more emphasis upon the two latter aspects of education.

For developing a sense of citizenship and producing an educated mind, the following seem essential :

(a) Every citizen must know the meaning of citizenship and the way democracy functions. He should have not only some knowledge of the history and geography of the country but also of its social conditions. In order to fulfil his duties as a citizen, he must also have some acquaintance with the working of the State. With the introduction of adult franchise, it is imperative for every voter to know the meaning of the vote. He should be instructed that in parliamentary democracy, the government is responsible to him, and his vote, therefore, is not merely a valuable right but also a great obligation. Much of the necessary knowledge in such matters can be imparted by verbal methods. In the case of illiterate adults it is obvious that the emphasis must be on the

spoken word rather than on written texts.

(b) These must also be instruction in the laws of personal and public health. True citizenship implies knowledge of and respect for the laws which govern the health of community. At present, in India, there is often emphasis on certain rituals of personal cleanliness, accompanied by colossal ignorance of and indifference to the laws of social health. One of the main purposes of social education must be to train people in clean and healthy living. This will involve information about ventilation and accommodation in houses, disposal of refuse, some rudimentary ideas of drainage and consideration for the convenience of neighbours and other members of the public.

(c) Social education must also mean the imparting of such information to the people as will enable them to effect some improvement in their economic status. This is necessary not only to rouse an interest among the adult illiterates in the course of study but also from the point of view of the community itself. It is obvious that adults will take a more immediate and active interest in anything which promises improvement in their economic status. Arrangements will, therefore, be made for training in a craft or the introduction of better techniques in existing crafts, and for improving general efficiency of the men.

(d) Social education, involving as it does the improvement of bodily and mental health, cannot ignore the proper training and refinement of the emotions. Art and literature are the instruments of this training. Folk music, drama, dance, poetry and recreative activities must be included in a scheme of social education.

(e) Social education should also contain an element of instruction in a universal ethic, with special emphasis upon the necessity of toleration of one another's differences in a democracy. In a way, this will be included in the course of training under (a), but, in addition, there should be a special attention devoted to the inculcation of tolerance, mutual appreciation and universal principles of right conduct.

A comprehensive programme of education on these lines will have to be undertaken for the whole of the Indian Union. We cannot, however, overlook that there are financial and other difficulties which make the execution of such a plan extremely difficult. I feel that we should, therefore, start the experiment in some selected area and, as we gather experience, extend the scope of our programme to other areas. Since it has been decided to start the programme of basic educution in Delhi Province from the 1st of July, I propose that the scheme of social education should also first be tried out there. The fact that Delhi is a small province and is also directly administered by the Central Government will make it easier to carry out the experiment in this area.

It is necessary that the basic school buildings and staff should be utilised to the fullest possible extent by serving as schools for children in the morning, adolescent schools and clubs for young people in the afternoon and education centres for adults in the evening. Our programme cannot be completely successful unless the basic schools sponsored by the Government are also centres for the life of the entire village community. It will be necessary to provide a fair proportion of games and group activities for the adolescents as otherwise their interest in instruction is likely to flag. Similarly in the case of adults, the emphasis will be more on social education than on mere literacy, and this will be imparted through visual, aural and oral methods.

The importance of adequate methods of visual and aural education for adolescents and adults need not be stressed. The Government of India intend to encourage the production of folk drama and rural plays by the villagers themselves. Prizes for the purpose may be given from time to time and competitions held between different villages or local units. Films can also play a great part in teaching the lessons of citizenship, social responsibility, personal health, public hygiene, physical drill and other matters of immediate benefit to the community. The radio is also a powerful instrument of aural education, and I have under consideration plans for full utilisation of both the films and the radio.

I need hardly say that all our education programme will ultimately depend upon the proper education of women. If women take to education, more than half of our problems will be

solved, Education mothers will mean children who can be easily made literate. From the point of view of expense and management, it would have been simplest if men and women could be taught through the same agencies. I know, however, that the existing conditions in India will not permit this. At the same time our finances will not allow a complete duplication of the whole apparatus for teaching men and women separately. I would, therefore, suggest that for the basic schools, that is, for children between the ages of 6 and 11, the institutions might be co-educational. For the adolescents, the solution is to set apart certain days in the week for girls and boys. I would suggest that three days in the week may be reserved for girls when the school centres will be entirely at their disposal. For grown-up women, we may reserve two days in the week for a similar purpose. I know that this is not a perfect solution but in the existing conditions I feel that in this way alone we can meet the demand for the necessary social education to be given to adolescent girls and grown-up women within the limitations of our financial and other resources.

The programme of universal education for Delhi will therefore be as follows :

(1) The village school will be a centre not only of instruction but also of sports and recreation for the entire village.
(2) Separate time will be allotted to children, adolescents and grown-ups.
(3) Certain days in the week will be reserved exclusively for girls and women.
(4) A number of motor vans fitted with projections and loud-speakers are now being secured; these will visit the village school when film and magic lantern shows will be given and recorded talks played. It is proposed that each school will be visited at least once a week.
(5) Schools will be provided with radio sets and arrangements made for broadcasting special programmes for school children, adolescents and grown-up people in the light of the scheme of social education sketched above. About 140 sets have already been provided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and it is proposed to supply the balance of 150 radio sets as early

as possible.

(6) Popular drama will be organised in the school and from time to time prizes given for the best plays produced.

(7) There will be provision for teaching national and community songs.

(8) Arrangements will be made for simple instruction to be given in some craft or industry suited to the locality.

(9) Lectures will be arranged in co-operation with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Labour to instruct villagers in the simple laws of social hygiene, methods of agriculture, cottage industries and co-operative activities.

(10) In co-operation with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, suitable films and slides will be shown from time to time. Arrangements will also be made for visits of public men from time to time to speak to the villagers on problems of national importance and the help and assistance of public bodies interested in constructive work will be welcomed to give effect to the programme of social education.

(11) Arrangements will be made for organising group games and competitions will be held from time to time between different schools and villages.

(12) Exhibitions and fairs and excursions will be organised from time to time.

16

NATIONAL EDUCATION AND FINANCE*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Twelve months have passed since we met last in Delhi. That was the first meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education held after the achievement of independence. Naturally we were full of enthusiasm and wanted to proceed with our programme of educational expansion as rapidly as possible. It was in this spirit that the Ministry of Education went ahead with its schemes and prepared a programme for realising our long cherished plan of expansion of education for the country.

You are, I am sure, aware of the sudden deterioration in the economic condition of the country which faced us during the latter half of the year. The danger of inflation and a rising spiral of prices grew so great that the Cabinet was compelled to reconsider the position and appoint an Economy Committee. That Committee recommended a drastic cut in the expenditure of all the Ministries and pressed that all development programmes must be suspended or at least slowed down. I realise the importance of economy, but at the same time feel that education is a matter which cannot brook suspension or even delay. Nevertheless, as the economic situation grew graver, the Cabinet was forced to give precedence to the resolution of the financial crisis over all other activities of the Government. Much against my will, I therefore agreed to slowing

*At the 15th Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, Allahabad, January 7, 1949.

down the tempo of our educational development but insisted that, as soon as there was some improvement in the situation, education must be one of our first priorities for the resumption of the full development programme.

Even with this slowing down, the present position marks a great improvement on the conditions that prevailed before 1947. Before the attainment of independence the education budget of the Government of India was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 2 crore. The first financial year of independence has been a perceptible expansion in the education budget and the next year's budget—in spite of financial difficulties and drastic economy---will be well over twice the amount of pre-independence days. I am glad to say that the New Year has brought with it a gleam of brighter days. I am hoping that I will soon be in a position to announce that the Government would go full steam ahead with the programme of expanding the National Education in all its states.

The first and foremost task of the National Government is the provision of free and compulsory basic education for all. In your last meeting, you stressed its urgency. This was reiterated by the All India Educational Conference which met immediately thereafter. You will remember that I pointed out to the Conference that the 40 years' programme laid down in the Report of the Central Advisory Board seemed too long and should be reduced. I also suggested that its programme of construction of school houses required fresh scrutiny in order to bring the expenditure within the limits of our financial capacity. I am glad to say that the Conference accepted both the suggestions and recommended that an expert committee should be appointed to go into the question in order to suggest ways and means for reducing the period and the cost of buildings. Accordingly, a committee of experts under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble B.G. Kher was appointed and it has submitted its interim report. According to this report, universal compulsory basic education can be introduced within a period of 16 years by two five-year and one six-year plans. The first five-year plan will aim at bringing that education to a major portion of the children of the country within the age-group of 6-11. The second five-year plan will extend compulsion to the remaining children of the same age-group so that at the end of ten years all children between the ages of 6-11 will be under compulsory instruction. The six-year plan will then extend the

scope of compulsion to 14 so that at the end of 16 years the programme of 8 years' basic education for children between 6-14, as envisaged by the Central Advisory Board, will be completely realised.

The Committee also went into the question of finances and suggested that the Centre should provide 30 per cent of the expenses while the provinces and local bodies should find the remaining 70 per cent. The following table shows the total expenses that would be incurred from year to year :

(*in Rs.*)

Year	*Expenditure on compulsory education*	*Incidental expenditure*	*Total expenditure*
1949-50	9,38,38,000	4,69,19,000 50% of col. (2)	14,07,57,000
1950-51	19,03,34,000	7,61,33,600 40% of col. (2)	26,64,67,600
1951-52	29,26,57,000	8,77,97,100 30% of col. (2)	38,04,54,100
1952-53	39,85,66,000	7,97,13,200 20% of col. (2)	47,82,79,200
1953-54	50,84,25,000	5,08,42,500 10% of col. (2)	55,92,67,500
1954-55	77,15,88,000	—	77,15,88,000
1955-56	104,73,44,000	-	104,73,44,000
1956-57	133,35,90,000	—	133,35,90,000
1957-58	154,95,58,000	—	154,95,58,000
1958-59	177,87,21,000	—	177,87,21,000
1959-60	202,63,63,000	—	202,63,63,000
1960-61	226,34,00,000	—	226,34,00,000
1961-62	251,25,38,000	—	251,25,38,000
1962-63	263,48,36,000	—	263,48,36,000
1963-64	276,32,49,000	—	276,32,49,000
1964-65	288,36,93,000	—	288,36,93,000

Notes : 1. These figures take account only of the provinces and exclude the States.

2. Incidental expenses are included to cover : (i) the cost of increased salaries of teachers in existing schools, (ii) the cost of educating older children who may join the new schools, and (iii) the other expenses

which would follow from the increase in the number of pupils at all stages. This percentage has been reduced year by year for the reason that as more and more students are covered by the compulsory scheme the excess of expenditure is bound to decrease.

3. These figures have been calculated on the basis that compulsion will be applied to 40 per cent of the age-group 6-7 during 1949-50 and advanced year by year so that at the end of the first five years 40 per cent of the age-group 6-11 will be under compulsion. The second five-year plan will start with compulsion for the whole of the age-group 6-7 and 40 per cent of the age-group 7-11. Here also compulsion will be extended year by year so that at the end of second five-year plan, compulsion will be applied to the whole of the age-group 6-11. During the six-year plan, compulsion will be applied in the first year to 50 per cent of the children in the age-group 11-12 and extended year by year so that at the end of three years there will be compulsion for 50 per cent of all children in the age-group 11-14. The second three years will extend compulsion to the remaining children till in six years all children in the age-group of 11-14 are brought under compulsion.

The Ministry of Education have accepted this interim report and tried to provide funds in our next year's budget on that basis. In view of the economic and financial dangers to which I have already referred, it has not, however, been possible to provide for the entire amount. Much against my will, I have been compelled to agree to a proposal to postpone the consideration of this scheme for the time being. One factor which weighed with me was that the Central contribution would be effective only if the provinces are in a position to provide their share of the expenses. The financial position of the country makes one doubt if the provinces can find the necessary funds. It has been decided to consider the question again sometime before March to find out how far we can carry out the plan. The Government have, however, provided funds for the training of teachers so that, as soon as the economic situation improves, we can go ahead with the programme of basic education.

We all realise the importance of basic education for the future welfare of the State. Equally important for immediate progress is adult education. In a democracy, the provision of such education is all the more necessary as without an educated electorate democracy cannot perform the functions expected of it. For this, we want not merely literacy, but mental development of the adults so that they can take an intelligent interest in the affairs of

their country and the world. The scope of adult education has therefore been extended and to mark this change it is proposed to call it social education in future. The committee which you appointed to prepare a scheme of adult education for the country has submitted its report and has also suggested this change of name. The Government have generally accepted the recommendations of the Committee and I am glad to announce that, in spite of inflation and its attendant financial difficulties, we have been able to provide funds in the next year's budget for the implementation of the plan.

I am also glad to inform you that a beginning has been made in the Province of Delhi with programmes for both basic and social education. Plans for the purpose were approved long ago but for reasons into which I need not enter here they were not carried into effect. The Ministry of Education decided that there should be no further delay and the scheme should be worked out in Delhi to serve both as an example and a challenge to other provinces. Accordingly, the Delhi Provincial Post-War Educational Development Board was formed. I have myself attended almost every meeting of the Board to ensure that programmes are put into effect as early as possible. In order to get over the difficulty of securing a sufficient number of trained teachers, it was decided to take trained refugee teachers from West Punjab and give them a short refresher course at Jamia Millia, Delhi. Two batches of teachers have already received their training and a third batch will soon start its course. Since then we have been able to establish two training institutes—one at Ajmer for men and the other at Delhi for women, and we hope that they will help to meet the demand for trained teachers for new basic schools as they are founded.

The first set of 47 schools was started on July 1, 1948, and the second set of 50 schools from the second half of November 1948. A third group of 50 schools will start from April 1, 1949, and it is hoped that before the end of the financial year 1949-50 the entire area of Delhi Province will be covered by such basic schools.

In order to make the programme of basic and social education one of immediate interest and utility to the villagers, it has been decided that these village schools will not only be places of instruction for the village children, but also centres of community

life in the villages. They will provide instruction to children, adolescents and adults and, in addition, serve as places of recreation and sport. It is also proposed to give the villagers practical training in some craft in order to improve their economic status and to organise sports and other forms of recreation for increasing their social and community sense. We have taken the help of the Ministries of Health, Labour, Information and Broadcasting, and Agriculture and prepared a composite syllabus which will be gradually introduced in these schools. The following 12-point programme will give a brief indication of the aims we have in view in the scheme of social and basic education :

(1) The village school will be a centre of instruction, welfare work, sports and recreation for the entire village.
(2) Separate times will be allotted to children, adolescents and grown-ups.
(3) Certain days in the week will be reserved exclusively for girls and women.
(4) A number of motor vans fitted with projectors and loudspeakers are being secured to visit the village schools. Film and magic lantern shows will be given and recorded talks played. It is proposed to visit each school at least once a week.
(5) Schools will be provided with radio sets and arrangements will be made for broadcasting special programmes for school children, adolescents and grown-up people in the light of the scheme of social education sketched above. About 140 sets have already been provided by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and more will be supplied as soon as possible.
(6) Popular dramas will be organised in the schools and from time to time prizes given for the best plays produced.
(7) There will be provision for teaching national and community songs.
(8) Arrangements will be made for giving simple instruction in some craft or industry suited to the locality.
(9) Lectures will be arranged in co-operation with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Labour to instruct villagers in the simple laws of social hygiene, methods of agriculture, cottage industries and co-operative activities.

(10) In co-operation with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, suitable films and slides will be shown from time to time. Arrangements will also be made for visits of public men to speak to the villages on problems of national importance. The help and assistance of public bodies interested in constructive work will be invited to give effect to the programme of social education.

(11) Arrangements will be made for organising group games. Competitions will be held from time to time between different schools and villages.

(12) Periodic exhibitions, fairs and excursions will be organised.

Only a beginning has been made in our scheme of social and basic education in the villages but this in itself has been a revelation to me and to all those who have seen the scheme at work. For long it has been said that villagers have no realisation of the importance of education. Their age-long inertia, sloth and poverty have been held as obstacles to the introduction of a scheme of National Education. It has been feared that because of their ignorance and superstitions, they may even resist any scheme of compulsory education and force may have to be used to bring education to their children. Experience in Delhi has completely dispelled these fears. I had always held the view that the villager in India has been misjudged in this respect. I have great pleasure in announcing that from the very first day of the programme, villagers in Delhi have responded with an enthusiasm that is beyond all expectations.

One of the methods we propose to use for extending social education as quickly as possible is the holding of educational *melas* or fairs from time to time. It is intended to organise sports during these *melas* as well .s arrange visits and lectures of prominent public men. In adc tion, the villagers will be encouraged to produce dramas of their own as well as exhibit products of local industry and craft. Educational films and radio programmes will be among other features at these *melas*. Two such *melas* have been held in Delhi—one in the month of November and the other only a few days ago. Villages—men, women and children—have responded with an enthusiasm that has been most heartening. Villagers have not been only passive spectators but active

participants. Each *mela* has called into activity latent energies of not only the village where it was held but of the entire locality. The experience of these two *melas* has confirmed me in my belief that the Indian villager is on the march today and is thirsting for knowledge. He is ready and anxious for progress and the fault will be entirely ours if we fail to provide him with the means of education on all fronts. I earnestly hope that the provinces will take up the plan and organise at least one *mela* a month in every province.

Since the last meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education, the whole question of scientific and technical studies has been surveyed afresh. You will remember the scheme of Overseas Scholarships instituted by the old Government for training our scientific and technological personnel. Experience showed that the Scheme required thorough overhauling and I appointed for the purpose a committee with Dr. B.C. Roy as its chairman. I also felt that a general survey of our scientific and technological resources end requirements should be made and entrusted the Scientific Manpower Committee with that task.

Both these Committees have recommended that immediate steps must be taken for strengthening the existing technological institutions in the country and starting new institutions for imparting instruction of the highest standard. They have rightly pointed out that it would be in the interest of the country to provide for such instruction within the country itself. This would gradually obviate the necessity of sending large number of students abroad. Till such time, however, as arrangements for imparting instruction upto the highest standard are complete, the despatch of students abroad must not cease.

The Government have generally accepted the recommendations of both these Committees and drawn up a modified scheme of Overseas Scholarships which will aim both at strengthening the teaching personnel in our universities and scientific and technological institutions and providing the necessary staff for carrying through the industrial development of the country. I have no doubt that you have already examined the papers circulated to you and will, if necessary, make constructive suggestions to strengthen our hands in carrying through the above programmes.

I have referred to the great financial difficulty with which the country is faced today. This has compelled us to slow down our

programme in many aspects of the educational development of the country. This is a contingency which I cannot but regret and the more so when I remember the extremely inadequate provision made for education of all types in India. When we compare the figures for educational expenditure in India with those in other countries, I cannot help feeling that we have, in fact, not yet made a beginning with a programme of National Education in the truest sense of the term. I have already referred to the extremely meagre educational budgets of the pre-independence days. In spite of the progress made since then, I am sorry to say that the provision for education last year amounted to only Rs. 3,85,00,000 out of a total Central Budget of Rs. 395 crore (excluding the Railways), i.e., less than 1 per cent. During the same year, the total of the provincial budgets shows a figure of Rs. 247 crore of which only about Rs. 30.5 crore were spent on education. Thus, in the case of India as a whole, only a little over 5 per cent has till now been spent for educational purposes and though the budget for 1949-50 will show a perceptible improvement, I must confess that the expenditure is not yet upto my expectations.

These figures may be compared with the amounts spent on education in countries like the U.K. and the U.S.A. In the U.K. the State spends on education £ 214,896,000 out of the total budgeted expenditure of £ 2,975,679,000. This represents about 7 per cent of the total budget, but, in addition, another 4 per cent of the total expenditure is contributed by local bodies. Thus in the U.K., the proportion of expenditure on education to the total budget is about 11 per cent. In the U.S.A., the total national expenditure on education is the colossal figure of 12,050,000,000 dollars. The total budgeted expenditure of the Federal Government is in the neighbourhood of 40,000,000,000 dollars. Thus, for a population of about 50 millions, the U.K. is spending about £ 300 millions, and for a population of about 140 millions the U.S.A. is spending 12,000 million dollars.

It may also be mentioned that according to the Steelman Report, the U.S.A. proposes to spend by 1957 one per cent of the total national income—not the State Revenue—for purposes of research alone in the universities and industries. This will represent a figure of something like 2,000 million dollars (approximately Rs. 750 crore). In addition, the U.S.A. Government propose to provide a sum of about 300 million dollars (Rs. 100 crore) for

equalising the opportunity of secondary and university education for children of comparatively poorer parents. Similarly, Great Britain is spending 76.5 million (Rs. 110 crore) for fundamental and applied research.

Not content with this, the British Government have now under consideration a proposal for further expanding the facilities for higher education by which from 1951 onward, over ninety per cent of the places in the universities and institutions of higher learning will be free. In other words, the process of compulsory education, which started in Great Britain in 1870 by providing universal free education at the primary stage and has continued since 1902 by the provision of free secondary education in the Grammar and the County Schools, has now been brought to its final fruition by making even university education for all practical purposes free and universal. No one can for a moment suggest that Great Britain has not her own financial and economic difficulties. This has not, however, prevented the implementation of her educational expansion programmes, and I trust and hope that we in India also will not allow considerations of financial stringency to hold up for a day longer than is absolutely necessary the programme of universal compulsory and free basic education which is essential for building up the free and democratic India of our dreams.

I have so long spoken to you about basic and social education. University education is, however, of equal importance for the future progress of the land. The recent World War has raised in every country of the world new questionings about the aims and objects of higher education. Such enquiry is of even greater importance to us in the context of our newly won freedom. I will not, however, go into this question today, as we have appointed the Universities Commission to examine the problem of higher education in all its aspects. You have pressed for the appointment of such a Commission for the last three years, and rightly so, for there has been no comprehensive survey of higher education in India since the Sadler Commission submitted its report. Even the Sadler Commission confined itself primarily to one university but the Indian Universities Commission, 1948, has been charged with an enquiry into the whole structure of our higher education in the universities and other institutions of study and research. I am glad that we have as chairman of the Commission so eminent an

educationist as Prof. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. He is being assisted by able colleagues from India and abroad. I am particularly happy that distinguished educators of the U.K. and the U.S.A. have offered us their services in this venture. I am hoping that the Commission will submit their report before the end of the year.

Before concluding, I will draw your attention to one other burning problem of the day. You recommended and the Government of India agreed that the medium of instruction in the primary stages must be the mother tongue. All provinces have accepted the principle, but I think you will agree that as yet only the general principle has been laid down. Difficulties have, however, been felt in working out the details and giving a practical shape to the principle. There is no problem where the mother tongue of the pupil is also the State language, but, where this is not the case, doubts have arisen on several points. It has not been clearly laid down at what stage the State Language should be introduced as a second language. Not is it clear when it should replace the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools. These and allied questions should be examined in detail; and fair and practicable solutions found so that nobody may have any ground for grievance. The Government of India could have taken a decision themselves, but I feel that your advice in the matter will be invaluable, as you represent not only the provinces and the states but also the enlightened opinion of the country.

I trust that you will give special attention to the problem during this session and define in a clear and unambiguous manner the detailed procedure for giving effect to an agreed principle. By doing so you will not only solve one of our most difficult educational problems but also render a real service to national unity.

17

A PLAN FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

It is exactly a year ago that I assumed charge of this Ministry on January 15, 1947. It was then my intention to summon immediately an educational conference of representatives of Provincial Governments, the States and the universities in order to chalk out our future programme of action. In fact, dates had been announced for such a conference twice, but circumstances over which we had no control intervened on both occasions. I need not go into the reasons for these postponements as they are well known to you and will only say that I have spared no efforts to summon the conference as early as possible. In any case we have met today and I have every hope that the combined wisdom of all who are today will enable us to formulative schemes that will meet adequately the educational requirements of this ancient land. I extend to you my cordial welcome and thank you all for your response to my invitation.

The agenda is already before you. You will find that it contains only the most pressing problems that confront us today. The first issue refers to the provision of basic education for every citizen of the State. It is accepted on all hands that without such education a modern democratic state cannot flourish or perform these functions which are expected of it. The scheme of Post-war

*Opening Address at the All India Educational Conference, New Delhi, January 16, 1948.

Educational Development prepared by the Central Advisory Board of Education has been accepted by the Central and the Provincial Governments. Steps have already been taken to set on foot the programme of action according to a five-year plan, but I must point out that all these have been done according to old methods and on the old scales. After the attainment of our independence, we cannot, however, be content with programmes which were considered adequate for the old regime. Thus, no one will for a moment tolerate today that 40 years must elapse before the full scheme of basic education for all the inhabitants of this land can be implemented. In fact, even half that period will seem to many to savour of delay and procrastination. We must, therefore, devise measures by which the educational progress of this country can be so accelerated that we reach our objective within a much shorter time.

I know the many difficulties and obstacles which face us. I know that on account of the happenings in the recent past, the attention of the Government and the people has often been diverted from constructive work. After full consideration of all these factors, I would still assert that education cannot wait. Even if other nation-building activities of the Government have to be slowed down or deferred on account of such difficulties, education, at any rate, must be pushed forward as rapidly as possible. We must not, for a moment, forget that it is the birth-right of every individual to receive at least the basic education without which he cannot fully discharge his duties as a citizen.

In talking of basic education, we have to deal separately with the problem of providing education to school-going children and to adults. The population of India today, after partition, is roughly 24 crores, if we leave out of account of the people of the States. The school population will therefore be about 2,93,72,000 if we consider the age-group of 6 to 11 years. If we calculate on the basis of even three teachers for every hundered pupils, this would require about nine lakhs of teachers for teaching about three crores of boys and girls. I will not raise here the question whether we should discourage single-teacher schools, though the best educational opinion favours at least two teachers for a school. In any case, the provision of nine lakhs of trained teachers immediately seems an altogether impossible task and nothing that the Government can do can remedy this defect overnight. In fact,

this seems to be one of the main reasons why 40 years was regarded as the minimum period which must elapse before educational facilities can be provided for all citizens of the land.

We have, however, already seen that we cannot wait for such a long time and therefore, my appeal will be to all educated men and women of this country to come forward to meet this deficiency. I would urge upon every educated man and woman to regard it as a sacred national service to come forward and serve as a teacher for at least two years. They should regard it as a sacrifice to the national cause and accept for their services whatever allowances the State may afford. We may also consider some kind of conscription for the purpose. If every matriculate is required to put in one year's and every graduate two year's service in education before he or she obtains his or her certificate, we would get a large supply of teachers for our purpose. If two lakhs of educated men and women come forward every year, we can in five years have the minimum number of teachers necessary for fulfilling our plans. This will, however, be an emergency measure and cannot continue indefinitely. We must, therefore, devote these five years for the greatest possible expansion in the provision of facilities for training teachers, so that, by the end of that period, we may gradually replace volunteer teachers by teachers who have taken up teaching as their vocation.

Another great obstacle towards the immediate provision of educational facilities for all is the financial implication of constructing the necessary school houses and other buildings. This, however, need not and should not deter us. I would go so far as to say that we need not just now mak any provision for building expenses at all. India is a country where for nine months in the year pupils can work in the open without any difficulty or injury to their health. In villages, if necessary, educational work can be carried on under the trees and even where structures have to be put up whether in town or village these can be built with bamboo and mud at a much lower cost than a pucca building would cost. In addition, we must never forget that in India there have already been voluntary contributions towards the establishments of schools and I have no doubt that if we can tap fully the resources of private maintenance, the problem of meeting the cost of educational structure will at least be partially met.

Another chief obstacle to the immediate fulfilment of the Basic

Education Plan is the problem of finance. For basic education alone we require at least nine lakhs of teachers. The Pay Commission recommended a scale of Rs. 30-50 for such teachers. I realise that this is hardly enough to attract the best type of candidates, but as I have started earlier, my appeal is to educated men and women to regard this educational service for two years as a sacrifice in the cause of the nation. They must, therefore, agree to work on this meagre pay and look at it more in the nature of an allowance than wages for their labour. I have suggested that we should have at least two lakhs volunteers every year which will give four lakhs of such volunteers at a time from the second year of the enforcement of the scheme. Even on the basis of pay suggested in the Pay Commission's Report, this would mean a wages bill of Rs. 2 crores pei month or Rs. 24 crores per year for the next five years. The amount actually spent on primary education by the Provinces and the Centre as shown in the budget for the year 1945-46 is as follows :

Name of Province	*Expenditure on primary education by various provinces druing 1945-46* *Rs.*
Assam	21,66,186
Bihar	2,09,820
Bombay	1,71,22,281
C.P. & Berar	23,60,391
Madras	2,89,28,403
Orissa	16,77,017
United Provinces	57,52,008
Total	5,82,16,106
Bengal (Undivided)	74,10,142
Punjab (Undivided)	57,66,474
Total	1,31,76,616
Total of all Province	7,13,92,722
Centrally Administered Areas	
Ajmer-Merwara	2,29,634
Civil and Military Stations, Bangalore	1,03,958
Coorg	47,430
Delhi	2,72,564
Minor Administrations	1,49,960
Total	8,03,546
Grand total	7,21,96,268

The above figures have been taken from the Provincial General Educational Table. Since then there have been considerable increases in the provision for Education in the Central and Provincial Budgets, but figures are not at present available for the years 1946-47 and 1947-48, except in the case of the Centre. In the Centre, the Budget provides for a little over Rs. 11 lakh for 1947-48. We may, however, ignore these variations as well as the variation that has been caused by the partition of the Provinces of Bengal and Punjab.

We would therefore have to find additional funds to the extent of about Rs. 16 crores for the next five years. In Bengal, an attempt has been made to find money for educational purposes by the imposition of an educational cess. It is for you to consider whether some such method may not be applied to other provinces in order to meet part of this gap. You have also to suggest what further steps the Central Government can take in addition to what it has already done.

I now come to the problem of providing for the education of adults who are illiterate. Its importance need hardly be emphasised, especially to a body of educational experts like you. It is obvious that with the extension of democracy, the problem of adult education has become even more important than it was in the past. As you know, some work for adult education has been started in the provinces since 1938 but this was on a very small scale and must be increased and expedited manifold, if we are to obtain the desired result. Adult education has two aspects, viz., (a) arrangements for making the adults literate, and (b) the provision of measures to enlarge their minds and enable them to take an intelligent interest in the affairs of the country.

I will take up the question of education in the second sense first as obviously this is more important in the case of adults than mere provision of literacy. Such expansion of the mind of the adults can largely be effected today through the use of scientific methods and machinery which has made our task in this respect much lighter than it was before. There is experience of countries like Russia and the U.S.A. where open-air drama, the film and the radio have been used to very great effect. Russia has, in fact, succeeded in carrying out her successive five-year plans largely through the use of such scientific methods and machinery. We should benefit by the experience of these countries and draw upon

the vast stores of educational films which have been built up in Russia and the U.S.A. At the same time, it has to be remembered that our conditions differ in many respects and their experience will have to be modified to meet our requirements. I am glad to inform you that the Education Ministry has recently established a Department of Social Education which will take up this problem. The expansion of the Department is, however, necessary in order to make it possible to provide such dramas, films and radio programmes in all Indian languages. I hope that very soon the Ministry will be able to publish complete plans and schemes for this purpose.

The problem of imparting literacy to adults must be taken up along with that of providing basic education to school-going children. For this purpose, we must not only depend upon the teachers who are engaged in such schools, but also call upon government employees of all categories to rendered such voluntary service as may be possible. This would be necessary, especially in the rural areas where it would not be possible to provide any alternative machinery for adult education Government employees can render great help both in their spare time by working in night schools and Sunday schools, and also by their example in introducing a 'drive' for literacy among their own subordinates who are illiterate. A time must soon come when literacy will be made one of the conditions for any employment under the Government, and in the meantime, the Government are considering methods by which illiterate government servants may be encouraged to become literate.

I now come to the second broad problem which we have to discuss in this Conference today. This concerns the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges. You are already aware of my views on this question. I hold that there is no place for English *as a medium of instruction* in future India, but at the same time there should be no precipitate action that may damage the cause of education. I hold that the replacement of English as a medium of instruction should be gradual and stage by stage so that there is the least possible interruption or interference with the process of education in the country.

I think it is not necessary to raise the question of the medium of instruction in the primary and secondary stages. Opinion is unanimous that instruction in these stages can be imparted only

through the mother tongue. Differences arise only when we come to the stage of education in the universities. Two sharply divided schools of thought hold the field. There are on the one hand those who want one common language as the medium of instruction for all the universities in India. There is another school that holds that education in the universities should be imparted through the regional language. I realise that there are weighty arguments in favour of both the alternatives. The Central Advisory Board, which has just completed its session, has discussed this question and decided to appoint a committee of experts to go into it and submit recommendations. I have been asked to nominate the members of the committee and I will announce the names as soon as this Educational Conference is over.

I placed my own views before the Central Advisory Board and said that we should not change the medium of instruction in the university suddenly but allow a period of five years during which we can prepare for the gradual replacement of English by an Indian language. This would mean that by the sixth year, English would no longer be necessary as the medium of instruction in the universities and an Indian language could take its place. I am glad to inform you that the Board is in full agreement with this view.

One important problem in this connection is in respect of scientific terms, but the Central Advisory Board has tried to solve it by declaring that scientific terms are international, and it would be a serious mistake to try to translate them. I agree with the view of the Board and believe that this is the only rational solution of the difficulty.

I may hear refer to the experience of other eastern countries which have already made the experiment of coining new words for scientific and technical terms of importing them from ancient classics. In Egypt, the question of scientific terminology became important in the 19th century when she took to modern European education on a large scale. Egypt, as you are aware, has a rich classical language from which it can drive most of the scientific terms. In fact, Arabic possessed many terms in Astronomy, Chemistry, Physiology and other Sciences which have since been incorporated into the European languages. It was therefore easy for modern Egypt to coin new Arabic terms in the old moulds and one group in Egypt sought to adopt these Arabic terms for current

use in Egyptian education. Many words were thus derived from the Arabic Classics and many new words coined, but experiment soon proved that this was not the happiest solution of the problem. With experience, the Egyptians were convinced that the scientific terms in current usage in modern Europe should be adopted, as they have become international and do not now belong to any particular nation or country. Turkey and Iraq have also come to the conclusion that in matters of science and knowledge there should be no narrow nationalism but a truly international approach. Similar has been the experience of China and Japan. It must, however, be admitted that for certain technical terms especially in Philosophy, Logic and Mathematics, many terms are already available in the Indian classical languages and we should certainly use them, especially as in their case there is not the same universal agreement as in the case of scientific terms.

The next problem I want you to consider is the question of reforms in university education. As I have already stated, there can be no question of narrow nationalism in the field of knowledge, but at the same time we must see that there is no wrong perspective of a nation's past history and culture nor a failure to encourage the highest ideals in national character and civilisation. Unfortunately, this has happened in India and I will draw your attention by way of example to the two particular instances of Philosophy and History.

To take up Philosophy first. Greek Philosophy was revived in Europe through the agency of the Arabs who were its commentators and critics during the Middle Ages. It was only during the Renaissance that direct translations were made from Greek and Latin. The result is that in Europe, even the general history of Philosophy starts with the Greeks, and ends with modern European Philosophy, touching merely the fringe of Indian and Chinese thought. This is the history of Philosophy which the universities teach in India. But you will all admit that this does not represent the true facts of the development of philosophical thought in the world. No one today can deny the supreme achievements of the Indian mind in the realms of metaphysics and philosophy. It is true that recently Indian Philosophy has been introduced as one of the subjects of study in the Indian universities, but it has not yet gained the position which it deserves in the general history of the philosophy of the world.

One of the earliest schools of Greek Philosophy is that of Pythagoras. The tradition of his visit to India may or may not be true, but his philosophy shows unmistakable marks of the influence of Indian thought. There is little doubt that the Indian mind had already advanced beyond the stage reached by Pythagoras. In fact, almost every school of Greek Philosophy has its counterpart in India. In addition, there are flashes of insight which we do not find in Greek Philosophy. I think that with the exception of two specific branches of learning, the Indian mind has shown itself superior in every respect to the achievements of the Greeks. The only two exceptions are in Logic and Astronomy. Aristotle's 'Logic' is superior in structure and scope to Indian 'Nyaya', while in Astronomy Ptolemy's 'Majestic' is superior to Brahma Gupta's 'Siddhanta' and the work of Aryabhatt. We, therefore, need a new history of Philosophy in which Indian Philosophy may find its rightful place.

Similarly in the field of History. Upto the time of Vincent Smith, there has been no reasonably true or correct History of India in English. Even Smith's History is defective and in many respects out of date. All histories used in our universities today reflect these defects. They suffer from both lacunae and distortions. Nothing is more important today than the reorientation of historical studies from the primary to the highest stages. This is a task which the universities must immediately undertake. The most practical method would be to prepare books in English which can then be translated into all the Indian languages. This would not only mean economy in labour but also give a uniformity in tone and treatment of the subject. I would, therefore, appeal to all the Indian universities to help in this noble task, and I can assure them that the Central Ministry will extend to them every possible help.

Another important question that I would like the Conference to consider is the study of the oriental languages and culture. We must admit that this has been most inadequate till now. I am sure there will be no difference of opinion that in the future we must make ample provision for remedying this defect. For this, two things are immediately necessary. We must, on the one hand, have a reform and simplification in the methods of teaching and, on the other, we must afford both encouragement and facility for such studies.

Even where oriental subjects have been taught in the universities, they have been treated in a most cavalier fashion. If we look at the plight of Sanskrit or any other of the classical languages in the universities, we cannot deny that this has been done in a most half-hearted fashion inspite of the fact that such studies are essential for a true appreciation of Indian history and culture. What applies to Sanskrit, applies also to the study of Arabic and Persian.

I would like to draw your attention to the provision of facilities for the study of other oriental languages as well and especially of Tibetan and Chinese. It is well known that many of the Buddhist scriptures and literature are preserved in Tibetan, though the original in Sanskrit has been lost. For instance, the *Tarka Bhashya* of Mokshankar Gupta could not for long be obtained in Sanskrit but a Tibetan translation was available and till recently that constituted the only source of our access to his thought. It is only lately that the original has been found and published in the Gaekwar Oriental Series.

The accounts of Chinese travellers are similar sources of illumination in respect of ancient India. Other treasures lie hidden in the Chinese languages and literature for the interpretation of our ancient history, if only they were accessible to us. For these reasons it is essential that our universities must provide adequate facilities for the study of these oriental languages. We must not forget that in the past, India was a centre where the currents of Asiatic thought met and from which flowed out streams which spread to the farthest corner of the Asiatic continent To appreciate Ancient India truly it is therefore essential to have a knowledge and understanding of other Asiatic languages and cultures as well.

18

EDUCATION AND RELIGION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

On the occasion of this fourteenth session of the Central Advisory Board of Education I accord my sincere welcome to you. Historically speaking, it is the fourteenth session as thirteen have already been held. But to be more accurate, I think we should call it the Inaugural Session of the Board, since the first thirteen took place during British rule which on August 15, 1947, came to an end and with it a long chapter of Indian history. Today, we are assembled in a new India which has yet to make its history.

I believe it will not be out of place to mention that the change in the political situation has greatly affected the temper and nature of the work which we have undertaken. The scales in which the educational problems were weighed by this Board until now have grown out of date. New scales with new weights will have to be substituted. The dimensions of the national problem of the day cannot now be judged by the measurements which have been employed so far. The new aspirations of the New India will require fresh outlook and new measures to tackle its problems.

With whatever depth of vision and sympathetic imagination the Board might have tackled the educational problems in the past, it could not escape the fact that there was no free National Government to support it. Inspite of its desire to have the fullest

*Presidential speech at the Fourteenth Session of the Central Advisory Board of Education, New Delhi, January 13, 1948.

scope it had to keep itself somewhat in restraint. Now things have changed. The nation, about the educational problems of which you are going to deliberate, has its own government at your entire disposal. The Government in its turn expects that you, too, offer your deliberations with the same tenacity of purpose and breadth of vision as are guiding the administration today.

But if we want to adopt new measures with fresh determination and redoubled efforts, it should not mean that we do not acknowledge the past services of the Board. Its lengthy reports covering thousands of pages are a record of the zeal and ability with which the task was handled in the past thirteen years and the present day educational activities of the country bear testimony to it. Probably the most valuable service rendered by the Board was the preparation of the scheme of Basic Education in 1944. It was the first occasion in the history of British India when the problem of elementary education was presented in its true aspect. A scheme was then initiated which contained the elements of broad outlook and bold action, the two things which were least expected in the then prevailing circumstances. The name of Sir John Sargent who was our Educational Adviser is intimately connected with the scheme because of the prominent part he took in framing it. I am glad that he will continue to remain in our country though at the moment he is away and unable to be present at this session.

Now we have to think how far this scheme can be adapted to suit the changed circumstances and how soon obstacles in our way can be removed. But I will not discuss this question at this time, as an educational conference which is to tackle such problems has been called to meet here as soon as this session is over. We shall have ample opportunity to taking up these questions there.

But there is a particular aspect of the question to which I shall invite your attention. In connection with the scheme of the Basic Education the question of religious instruction had cropped up at the time. Two committees of the Board pondered over it but they were unable to come to an agreed decision. I should like this question to be reconsidered in the light of the changed circumstances. For our country this question has a special importance.

It is already known to you that the nineteenth century liberal

point of view concerning the imparting of religious education has already lost weight. Even after the World War I a new approach had begun to assert itself and the intellectual revolution brought about in the wake of the World War II has given it a decisive shape. At first it was considered that religions would stand in the way of the free intellectual development of a child but now it has been admitted that religious education cannot altogether be dispensed with. If national education was devoid of this element, there would be no appreciation of moral values or moulding of character on human lines. It must be known to you that Russia had to give up its ideology during the last World War. The British Government in England had also to amend its educational system in 1944.

So far as India is concerned, the problem presents itself in an entirely different shape. Europe and America felt the need of religious education as it was observed that without religious influences people became over-rationalistic. But insofar as they are working in Indian life we have to face the other side of the medal. We have no fear that people will become ultra-rationalists. On the contrary we are surrounded by over-religiosity. Our present difficulties, unlike those of Europe are not creations of materialistic zealots but of religious fanatics. If we want to overcome them, the solution lies not in rejecting religious instruction in elementary stages but in imparting sound and healthy religious education under our direct supervision so that misguided credulism may not affect the children in their plastic stage.

It is obvious that millions of Indians are not prepared to see that their children are brought up in an irreligious atmosphere and, I am sure, you, too, will agree with them. What will be the consequence if the Government undertake to import purely secular education ? Naturally, people will try to provide religious education to their children through private sources. How these private sources are working today or are likely to work in future is already known to you. I know something about it and can say that not only in villages but even in cities the imparting of religious education is entrusted to teachers who though literate are not educated. To them religion means nothing but bigotry. The method of education, too, is such in which there is no scope for broad and liberal outlook. It is quite plain, then, that the children

will not be able to drive out the ideas infused into them, in their early stage, whatever modern education may be given to them at a later stage. If we want to safeguard the intellectual life of our country against this danger, it becomes all the more necessary for us not to leave the imparting of early religious education to private sources. We should rather take it under our direct care and supervision. No doubt, a foreign government had to keep itself away from religious education. But a National Government cannot divest itself of undertaking this responsibility. To mould the growing mind of the nation on the right lines is its primary duty. In India, we cannot have an intellectual mould without religion.

But if religious instruction is to be a part of basic education, what will be its proportion ? How is it to be managed ? These are questions which are to be thoroughly considered. Indeed, there will be difficulties in the way. A solution will have to be found. But I need not go into details. If the main issue is settled, details can be tackled later on. In any case I request you to appoint a committee to go into the question *ab novo*. It may be authorised to send its recommendations directly to the Government.

There is another problem on which you have to take a final decision now. What is to be the medium of instruction in our educational institutions ? I am sure there are two things with which you will agree. First, that in future English cannot remain the medium of instruction. Secondly, whatever the change may be in this direction, it should not be sudden but gradual. In my opinion, so far as higher education is concerned, we should come to the decision that the *status quo* may be preserved for five years. But along with it a provision may be made by the universities for the coming change. I should like you to make your suggestions to the Government after due deliberation.

But in this connection a fundamental question arises with regard to Indian languages. How is the change to be brought about ? Is university education to be imparted through a common Indian language or the provinces may be given an opportunity to have their own regional languages for university teaching ? English was a foreign language. We were greatly handicapped by having it as our medium of instruction. But we were also greatly benefited in one way that all the educated people in the country

thought and expressed themselves in the same language. It cemented the national unity. It was such a great boon to us that I should have advocated its retention as the medium of instruction, had it not been fundamentally wrong to impart education through a foreign language. But obviously I should desist from offering this advice. I put it to you, if only till recently a Madrasi or a Punjabi or a Bengalee felt no difficulty in receiving education through a foreign language, why he should be handicapped if he were to be educated through one of the Indian languages. If instead of English we adopt an Indian language, we shall certainly be able to retain the same intellectual unity which was created for us by the English. But if we fail to substitute an Indian language for English our intellectual unity will certainly be affected.

The alternative course before us is to have regional languages for university teaching and one common compulsory language for the Central Government and for inter-provincial communication. Anyhow, it is but necessary that you should come to a final decision on this point after discussion and deliberation.

19

ALIGARH AND INDIAN NATIONALISM*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

In accepting the invitation extended so cordially by your Vice-Chancellor to come and address the annual convocation of Aligarh University, it was but natural that my thoughts should turn to the occasion when I first came in contact with it. That was 36 years ago and took place in circumstances which represented me to many as an opponent of this institution.

The facts of the case were, however, entirely different. It was a time when the Indian Muslims not only stood aloof from all political movements of the day but were inclined to oppose the country's struggle for emancipation. The single largest factor responsible for such political inertia of the Indian Muslims was the lead which the late Sir Syed Ahmed, founder of this institution, had given in the last quarter of the 19th century. The Aligarh Party which continued his policy tried to keep the Muslims out of the Indian National Congress and was generally successful except in the case of a few distinguished individuals.

It was in the background that I brought out the *Al Hilal* in 1912. From the beginning of my political life, I was convinced that the Indian Muslims must participate in the movement for emancipation and work towards that end through the National Congress. It was inevitable that I should criticise the political lead which the late Sir Syed Ahmed had given and which represented the policy of the Aligarh Party. I therefore came into a

*Convocation Address at the Aligarh University, February 30, 1949.

clash with this party on the political issue. This was, however, regarded by its members as opposition not only to the founder's political policy but to the institution itself. In fact, some of them went so far as to look upon me not only as an opponent but an enemy of Sir Syed Ahmed and Aligarh.

Nothing was, however, farther from the truth. It is true that I regarded the political lead of Sir Syed Ahmed as a grave blunder but at the same time I had the highest admiration for the educational and other reforms which he carried out. I regarded, and still regard him as one of the greatest Indians of the 19th century. His achievements in the field of education and social reform could not, however, blind me to the wrong lead he gave to the Indian Muslims in the field of politics. Thirty-six years have passed since then but as I survey the course of events during this period, I find no reason to revise my judgment on this issue. I then held and still hold that Sir Syed was a great reformer in the educational and social fields, but the wrong lead he gave in politics has been responsible for many of the evils from which we have suffered. It is, however, not my purpose to discuss the political role today but to pay my tribute to the memory of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the educational reformer, who laid the foundation of modern education among the Indian Muslims.

Today, Western education has become part of our national life and we naturally think of it when we use the term 'education.' It is, therefore, difficult to realise the opposition and struggle which, a hundred years ago, faced the reforms who wanted to introduce this new education in India. They had not only to blaze a new trail but had to contend with obstacles and difficulties at every step. They had to face all those forces which any movement for reform has to face. The prejudices and superstitions of ages clouded the minds of the people. Accepted beliefs and age-old sentiments were both against such a change. The cry of religion supplied the opponents of progress with one of their most potent weapons. The path of religion is not in fact opposed to that of reason and knowledge but unfortunately this has often been represented to be so. The usual cry was that Western education was opposed to the teaching of religion and those who held religion dear must therefore adhere to the old education.

Human thought has had to face this conflict at different times

in different countries. Europe went through this struggle in the 17th and 18th centuries while the Eastern countries faced this conflict in the 19th century. The Hindus of India faced this struggle earlier and ended it quickly. Among the Muslims, it took a longer time but in the end the inevitable happened. The forces of change triumphed and the new order had to replace the old. So far as the Muslims of India are concerned, one can assert without any fear of contradiction that the man who played the most important role in this struggle is the presiding spirit of this University. The battle was fought here in Aligarh and Aligarh is a visible embodiment of the victory of the forces of progress.

Some of our writers have compared Sir Syed Ahmed Khan with Raja Ram Mohan Roy. To a large extent the comparison is valid. What Raja Ram Mohan Roy did for Bengal was done by Sir Syed Ahmed, 40 years later, for Northern India and especially for the Muslims of the country. The only difference between the two is that the main reforms of Raja Ram Mohan Roy were in the field of religion while those of Sir Syed were in the field of education. They have, however, left the stamp of their personality in all spheres of intellectual activity. Religion, education, social life, language, literature and journalism bear witness to their spirit of reform and creative energy.

We have also to remember that even though Sir Syed Ahmed was opposed to the political movement of the Congress, there was not the least tinge of communal politics in his attitude. His activities even in the political field comprised both Hindus and Muslims. He was throughout his life a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. He opposed whatever was in any way likely to cause dissension or difference between them. In his speeches, he again and again used the beautiful metaphor that Hindus and Muslims were the two eyes in Mother India's face.

We can form some idea of his outlook on Indian nationalism from the significanee he gave to the term 'Hindu.' In addressing an association of Hindus in Lahore he said, "I am sorry that you have restricted in this manner the application of the term 'Hindu.' You have applied it to a particular religious group. But to my mind this application is wrong. I count as Hindu all those who are the inhabitants of this country whatever be their religion or race. This is the reason why I take pride in the fact that I am a

Hindu." If the Hindus and Muslims of India had understood the spirit of this teaching and followed it, the whole course of recent events would have taken a different turn.

Sir Syed Ahmed laid the foundations of this educational institution with a specific object. He had been impressed by the spirit of English education and realised that its excellence lay not merely in imparting instruction but in training of a special kind. The peculiarity of this training was that it developed the character of young men and women and gave them a distinct stamp. He also felt that along with European education, the Muslims must have religious instruction and training. He knew that without such provisions the new education would not be popular among the Muslims. He realised that his objects could not be achieved without a special institution for the purpose. He, therefore, dedicated the remaining years of his life to the creation of the Aligarh College. We must remember that this was the first institution in India which sought to create the atmosphere of a British Public School.

The scheme he had in mind initially was the establishment of a residential university on the lines of Cambridge. He had, however, to content himself with the establishment of only a college. Considering the prevalent conditions, this was no mean achievement. The movement for the University was started after his death as a memorial to him and was accomplished after hard labour of some 20 years.

Sir Syed had established in Aligarh not only a college but an intellectual and cultural centre in tune with the progressive spirit of the times. The centre of this circle was Sir Syed himself and he attracted round him some of the best intellects of the day. Perhaps no journal in India has ever had such influence upon the mind of the generation as his *Tehzib-Ul-Akhlaq*. Sir Syed founded this journal after return from his tour in England. He and his colleagues were its main contributors. In fact, this journal laid the foundation of modern Urdu literature and so developed the language that today it is capable of expressing the highest and most abstruse thoughts. Perhaps, there was not a single literary figure among the Muslims of the day who was not influenced by his circle. The best Muslim authors of the modern age were nourished here. Here developed the new schools of research, interpretation and reconstruction of Muslim thought. Though

modern Urdu poetry was born in Lahore, it was here that it found the atmosphere most conducive to its growth. Poems of a new style were composed and read at the sessions of the Mohammedan Education Conference. This was also the first forum of Urdu oratory. All the important speakers of the day were created or nurtured on this platform.

The 19th centary was for India, as for other regions in the East, a transitional age. The old forms of life and thought were being demolished and new ones set up in their place. The old earth of India was being moulded into a new form. So far as the Indian Muslims are concerned, one can say that it was in Aligarh that these movements of reform were consummated. It was one of the regions which took the lead in the creation of a new India. The 19th century marked a period of renaissance for the Indian spirit and Aligarh was one of the centres of such renaissance.

It is true that with the death of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aligarh lost many of its distinctive features. Though the College was raised to the status of a University, it could not revive the traditions of its early glory. Nevertheless, you must remember that this glorious heritage is yours, and it is for you to revive the past splendour of Aligarh. The inscriptions which have been carved on the walls of your Strachy Hall may fade with the passage of time, but the inscriptions which Aligarh has written on the modern period of Indian history can never fade. Future historians will discover in Aligarh one of the main sources which have contributed to the evolution of modern India.

An educational institution which has such a glorious past must necessarily hold the promise of an equally glorious future. I am not aware what the state of your minds is today, nor in what colours the future appears to you. Does it being to you the message of closing doors or of opening gates that introduce you to new vistas of experience ? I do not know what visions are before you, but I will tell you what visions I see. You perhaps feel that doors that were open have been closed. I see that doors that were locked have now opened. In the words of the Persian Poet.

Tafawut ast main-i-shanidan-i-man-o-to
Tu bastan-i-dar, o, man fatahe-bab me shanwam.

What you and I hear as different. You hear the sound of closing doors but I of doors that open.

I want that I should speak to you frankly and without mental reservations and I am sure that this is what you would expect of me. If I thought that you were still living in that atmosphere of communal politics which was prevalent before the 15th of August, 1947, I would without hesitation say that your future does not hold that promise which, as an Indian Muslim, I would like you to have. I am glad that there has been a profound change since then and the signs of a new era are becoming clearer every day. You have realised in good time what the intellectual atmosphere of this institution must be in the changed circumstances of today. You have responded to the call of the new times and created conditions which are in conformity with the changed outlook. I have no hesitation in saying that by conforming to the spirit of the times, you have rendered a great service not only to this Institution but to all Muslims of the Indian Union. For this, I extend to you my sincere congratulations.

I would like to describe to you briefly the Central Government's plan and programme of national education and the place which an institution like Aligarh University will have in that new scheme. I think you will agree that the educational set-up for a secular and democratic State must be secular. It should provide for all citizens of the State the same type of education without any distinction. It should have its own intellectual flavour and its own national character. It should have as its aim the ideal of human progress and prosperity. The Indian Union has set before itself such a scheme of common education for all without distinction or discrimination in favour of any community or group.

At the same time, it recognises that there is scope for educational institutions which emphasise certain special types of learning. Their doors should, however, be open to all who are interested in such studies. This is the sphere of national education in which your institution can find its proper place in conformity with the spirit of the times. In this way, you will, in spite of your special characteristics, be a part of the general scheme of education and serve a special function in it. For this you must, however, display the widest catholicity of spirit. It is said that Plato had the following text inscribed on his Academy : "Those who do not know Geometry, have no place here." Your Institution must not

have even such a restricting clause. Your motto should be that you will welcome both those who "know Geometry" and those who "do not."

I am aware that the governing principle in your Institution has been from the very beginning wide and liberal. When your College was founded, the very first batch of students included Hindus as well as Muslims. Your staff has also been recruited from all communities. The names of certain Hindu professors have become part of your institution's history. I am sure that these traditions will be broadened and further enriched in the course of time.

Study and research in Islamic learning and Islamic history have been part of your tradition. I must say that, after the death of Sir Syed, it no longer displayed the vigour it had during his days. Even after the University was established, old hopes were not fulfilled. Your duty today is to revive those old traditions and to create in your University an atmosphere of research and enquiry into all the spheres of knowledge.

I have already reminded you that Aligarh was the place where modern Urdu literature developed. This is an achievement of which your University can be rightly proud. It is your duty to cherish this heritage and further enrich it. I must, however, remind you that your literary efforts must have a wider field than in the past. You should take an equal interest in Hindi literature. Muslims have been noted for their interest in different languages and literatures. Hindi literature has the same claim on the Muslims as on the Hindus of India. Both the communities have contributed equally to the development of Urdu and Hindi literatures. The new literature in Brij Bhasha which commenced in the Mughul period was the result of the patronage of rulers like Akbar and Jehangir and the contributions of writers of genius like Mohammad Jayesi, Khan Khanan and Abdul Jalil Bilgrami. We find that, upto the end of the 18th century, the number of Muslim poets who wrote in Brij Bhasha is considerable. The time has come when you must revive that old tradition. I desire that this Institution should produce a large number of writers who are equally at home with Hindi and Urdu literatures.

The question of script is one of the controversial problems of today. You know what the opinion of Gandhiji was in this respect. His sincere desire was that every Indian should know

both the Urdu and the Devanagri scripts. That is why he founded the Hindusthani Prachar Sabha and made it an essential condition that its workers should know both the scripts. This has also been my opinion for years. I feel that this is the only solution which is possible in the present circumstances. I hope that the lovers of Urdu literature will not wait to find out the reactions of the advocates of Hindi literature, but will themselves do what they regard as conducive to the best interest of the country. In every other sphere of life, one may wait to see what others do, but in the field of learning we can wait for others only at the risk of detracting from our credit. If others are content to know only one script, we need not be sorry that we have learnt two. My sincere desire is that every Muslim in India should learn both the scripts, and thus set an example before the country. This was the message of Mahatma Gandhi, and I am confident that Muslims will act upto it with enthusiasm.

I am glade to find that there is already a recognition of the importance of such work on all sides, and that books have been written in Urdu which make it easy to learn Devanagri script and become familiar with Hindi literature. Some organisations have been set up in different parts of the country for this purposes. They have already started their activities. I am sure that you have realised the importance of this work and your Institution will be recognised as one of its most active centres.

I will now conclude with a few words of advice to the young graduates who have taken their degrees today and are entering into the responsibilities of life. You yourselves have, no doubt, felt the tremendous changes which have taken place since the days you entered the portals of this University. When you first jointed this Institution, you were members of a subject nation. Today you are leaving this University as free citizens of an independent India. I am not sure whether all of you appreciate fully the extent of this tremendous change. As members of a subject nation, you suffered many disabilities. As citizens of a free State, you enter into new responsibilites. The widening of opportunities which freedom has brought has also necessarily brought with it the need for greater loyalty and devotion to your State. Today, there are no limits to what you can achieve but this very fact imposes upon you the duties which freedom brings.

You are the citizens of free India—a State which is determined

to develop its political and social life on secular and democratic lines. The essence of a secular and democratic State is freedom of opportunity for the individual without regard to race, religion, caste or community. As members of such a State, you have, therefore, the right—provided you have the necessary qualities of character and attainment--to expect all doors to open to you, whether in the fields of politics, trade, industry, services or the professions. There is no gainsaying the fact that in the past many of the alumni of this Institution looked to nothing but employment under the Government. Freedom must bring in a widening of the mind and an enlargement of your ambitions. You must therefore look forward in a free India to the utilisation of your talents in the manner best suited to the needs of the Nation.

I have no doubt in my mind that if you can imbibe this spirit of progressive nationalism which is the motto of our secular democratic State, there will be no position in any field of life that will be beyond your reach. I would therefore urge upon you to develop and strengthen your character and acquire knowledge that will fit you to play your rightful part for the future progress and prosperity of the country.

20

EDUCATION AND INDEPENDENCE*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Last year the Chancellor of your University invited me to come here and deliver the Convocation Address. Your able Vice-Chancellor too pressed me for it. I would have certainly agreed to your request but my ill health stood in my way and I had to beg leave to be excused. But this year again when I was approached I could not venture to offer an excuse. Now I am here, and thank you for the opportunity you have given me to place my views before you.

Perhaps this is the first time in the history of the Indian universities when English is being replaced by an Indian language for delivering a Convocation Address. I do not know what your reactions would be to my speaking in Hindustani. Do you think it is necessary for me to offer an apology for breaking with the past ? No doubt, it is a departure from the old established practice and whenever a tradition is given up it is customary to offer an excuse. But I do not think you require an explanation from me. Whatever I am doing is no doubt an innovation, but I may be permitted to say that it is neither improper nor inopportune. Therefore, there is no need for an apology. Standing as I do before an audience entirely composed of Indians and within the precincts of an Indian university what could be more natural for me than to speak in an Indian language ? Indeed, if an apology

*Convocation Address at Patna University, December 21, 1947.

was needed, it was only for the adoption of a language forced upon us by the course of historical events. Even in our own country we were made to give up our own languages and adopt the language of a foreign country. Today, we find ourselves in the unenvitable predicament of offering explanations. The rest of the world naturally wants to know why we are without a national language in spite of our independence. How is it that this unnatural state of affairs has come to exist that we have no Indian language for running our government and our education ?

Now the question arises how this unnatural state of affairs came to pass. There can be only one answer to this question. Our educational system was not introduced by us. It was founded and controlled by foreigners. Whatever they decided to teach us was right, but their method of imparting education was wrong.

It is already known to you that during the regime of the East India Company when the question of introducing Western education in India first arose, the British officials were divided. One group was of the opinion that the old indigenous system of education should be encouraged while the second group was in favour of Western education. Ultimately, it so happened that the second group had its way. The famous Minute of Lord Macaulay bears upon this controversy. So far as this Minute deals with the introduction of Western learning, it was correct and we have nothing to say against it. But the method of teaching adopted by them was entirely unsuited to the life and needs of our countrymen. No Indian language but English which was foreign to us was made the medium of instruction. The result was that modern education in India began to be imparted in an un-Indian way. The Indians had to shape their minds in artificial and not in natural moulds. Not only they had to change their language but also their minds. Their whole approach to different branches of learning was through the medium of a foreign tongue. Now it became necessary for every Indian child to shape an artificial mind and to tackle every aspect of learning from an unnatural angle of vision. He could not enter the sacred precincts of learning with a natural mind.

His whole energy which should have been entirely devoted to learning is now divided, and he is forced to spend a great part of it in learning and mastering a foreign language.

Another great harm that accrued from it was that the development of our languages was impeded. If the Indian languages had been made the media of instruction a hundred and fifty years ago they would have come in line with the progressive languages of the world.

Supposing this educational revolution had been brought about by our own hands, we should have certainly done what other countries of Asia and the East did in the nineteenth century. Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Persia, China and Japan all felt the need of having western education. They established schools and colleges for modern learning, but none of them had the experience of undergoing the artificiality of giving up their own language and receiving education through the medium of a foreign language.

It cannot be denied that the conditions prevailing in India were certainly different from those of other eastern countries and it was not easy to decide which language of the country should be the mədium of instruction. At that time three classical languages, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit were taught in India. They were capable of becoming the media for western education but none of them could become the medium of instruction in India. Sanskrit was not a spoken language and its teaching was confined only to a few. Arabic too was in the same category so far as India was concerned. It was known only to a limited number of scholars. Persian, no doubt, was generally studied and was the official language of the country for about 600 years. But that too was not an Indian language. No Indian could speak Persian without learning it in the first instance. Evidently, only those languages could be adopted as the media of instruction which were spoken in the various parts of India. But all these languages had not fully developed, and they were not so refined or polished that they could serve the purpose of higher education. Under the circumstances they were brushed aside. Persian was disposed of simply by saying that it would not do for India. Thus ended the whole controversy.

But it may be remarked here that the difficulties which India had to face in the matter of language also presented themselves to some of the other Asian countries. Indeed, Egypt, China and Persia had their own classical languages. But Turkey and Japan were linguistically more or less in the same position as the Indian languages were in the nineteenth century. Their whole literary

wealth was only poetical, but they had little prose literature. Still, unlike India they did not adopt a foreign language for purposes of education. They made their own languages the media of instruction and the result is before the world. Today in all the universities of Turkey and Japan education is imparted through the language of the country. There is no field in any branch of learning where their national languages are not advancing.

Had the educational policy of India been in the hands of Indians they would have adopted the same course as was done by Turkey and Japan. India today in that case would not have had to face a situation when I have to think of making excuses for delivering an address in our own language.

But friends, there are always two sides to a picture in this pictorial world of ours. Whatever I have said upto now is one aspect of it. Justice demands that we should examine the other side of the medal as well.

Howsoever wrongly the English language made its way into our life, the fact remains that it has influenced our mental and educational outlook for the past one hundred and fifty years. This state of affairs though harmful in some ways has also benefited us in many ways. We have to acknowledge it without reservations. The greatest advantage that we gained from the adoption of English was that many of the obstacles were automatically removed from our newly born national life. It has led to the unification of the whole of the country. All the different parts of the country were brought together in spite of distances and different languages. In this respect it can be said that English has played the same part in cementing and uniting India as did Persian in Moghul times. Our country is a sub-continent and every part has its separate entity. But the English language has been responsible for creating a bond of mental fellowship among all educated Indians from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. It is a connecting link between all the Provincial Governments, universities, Legislative Assemblies, public platforms and national organisations. It was this state of affairs that led to the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 which created political awakening and gave a new national life to the country.

Then we have been benefited in another direction also. Through English India cultivated direct intellectual relationship with Europe and America. Her voice reached the outer world

without any intermediary. I do not feel the slightest hesitation in saying that India's position and recognition in the international world are greatly due to our having recourse to the English language both written and spoken.

Anyway whatever opinion we may hold about English, we find it influencing all aspects of our national life. Now a basic problem confronts us. What is to be our attitude in future towards English ? As the Ministry of Education in the Government of India has been entrusted to me, naturally you will want to know my views on education and language. I have ample expression to my ideas before but I will utilise this occasion and invite your attention to an important aspect of this question.

One thing is quite clear and definite and I have no doubt that any Indian will disagree with me. The position that English occupies today in our educational and official life cannot be sustained in future. It is but essential that Indian languages should find their legitimate position. But we have to decide after mature deliberation how to bring about this change. Obviously there are two courses open to us. We may either take an immediate and sudden step or we may proceed gradually measuring our way and considering the pros and cons of our steps. I wish to make it quite plain to you that after having considered all the aspects of the question I have come to the conclusion that it is the second alternative alone that can suit us. If we are precipitous and take hasty steps without due consideration, we may endanger our national fabric.

Surely you cannot be unaware of the fact that no Indian would be more anxious than myself to see that Indian languages should replace English. You are also aware of the fact that I am not indebted to English college or school. As a student I was not even for a day in any college or school. I was brought up in a family where the old traditions of Indian learning and culture prevailed and there could not be the slightest trace of English education. Whatever education I received as a student was Arabic and Persian and was imparted in the old style. I came to learn English much later by self-study only. From this it will be clear to you that my educational connection with English is not of the same type as yours. You need not therefore suspect that I am in any way influenced in my opinion by my English education. I can make bold to say that my opinion is perfectly unbiased. I am not

one of those who are the products of English type of universities. I am entirely disconnected with them and as such can take a detached point of view and understand your needs and requirements.

I find that from various parts of the country voices have been raised that we should at once banish English from our government offices. In some provinces decisions have been taken to the effect that from the New Year the Government Gazette will not be published in English. I have not the slightest doubt that this kind of precipitancy will retard the government machinery. It is correct and essential to install provincial languages in place of English. But howsoever essential and desirable a thing may be, any hurried step, instead of helping us, may prove harmful. Even a good thing, if done in haste, may stand in our way.

Suppose you decide today in your province that after six months in all government offices English will be discarded. Just imagine what will come to pass in that case. Today, English is serving the purpose of an inter-provincial language. The Central Government is being run with the help of English. What language is going to take the place of English ? What will be the connecting link between Bengal and Madras ? How will Assam and Bombay communicate with each other ? How will the Central Government correspond with the provinces ? You will naturally say we shall have a common language instead of English. But I put to you where is that language as yet ? Will that language suddenly replace English ? Ample time will be required for an Indian language to develop so as to become a vehicle of thought among all the peoples of India and serve as the official language of the country. If you suddenly displace a language which is holding its own for the past one hundred and fifty years and install in its place a language which needs some time to develop, you will not be able to solve the problem of language. On the other hand, you will create chaos and confusion in all your affairs.

We should remember that so long as the British were the rulers in India there was the danger that we might be swept away by all those influences which were the direct outcome of British rule. Now that we are a free nation, that danger is past. But then again there is the danger of going to the other extreme. We may become anti-everything that is English. I may warn you against this new danger. If you are not on your guard it may again

thwart your national aspirations.

We have yet to evolve our national life. It can be perfected only when our languages come to occupy their natural position. We should first make a well thought out plan and proceed step by step.

After carefully considering all the implications of this question I have come to the conclusion that the problem of language has two aspects—one concerns government offices and the other education.

For government offices we should chalk out a programme on the following lines :

(1) The Central Government and the Provincial Governments should decide that in all government offices in future an Indian language will be used side by side with English. But insofar as English is the official language, the *status quo* will be preserved for five years.

(2) During these five years the Indian language will have to be so developed as to adapt itself to the official language. Its use may be encouraged gradually so that in the sixth year it may completely replace English.

In other words in the next five years there will be two official languages—one Indian language and the other English. In the sixth year only one language will be left. English will naturally lose its place except in some special departments.

So far as education is concerned, the following should be the programme :

(1) We should decide that the medium of instruction throughout will be the regional language.

(2) So far as elementary and secondary education is concerned, there is no obstacle in our way. But we have to make provision for higher education. We have to make a start straightaway. Here, too, we shall have to fix a time-limit of five years. In this period we have to so advance that in the sixth year all branches of higher education should be handled through our own regional languages.

(3) By making the Indian languages the media of instruction it should not be understood that there will be no room left for English in our educational system. In order to

> keep ourselves in direct touch with the achievements of Europe and America a large section of our people will have to depend on English. English at present occupies an honoured place in the curricula of studies in Asia and the East. It is serving a useful purpose in creating contacts for us with foreign countries. We have connections with countries such as China, Japan, Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria, Persia, Turkey only through English. English is an international language today. It is in our interest that we should make the best use of our knowledge of English and continue its study in our educational institutions. But it goes without saying that with the adoption of an Indian language it can be given the place of an important second language. English will be one of the special subjects for post-graduate studies.

As the problem of language and education is equally important for all the provinces, the best method for its consideration will be for the representatives of provinces to assemble together and deliberate on it. The Central Government will help them as much as it can. It was one of the objects for which an Educational Conference was to be called by the Government of India in July 1947 but it had to be postponed on account of the political conditions prevailing them. Now it has been decided to hold it in January 1948. It is hoped that we will fully consider this problem on that occasion.

In this connection there is another thing to which I shall invite your attention. Man is always inclined to go to extremes in realms of thought and action. It is very seldom that he steers a middle course, and it is where he stumbles. He is like the watch of which the regulator has gone wrong. It goes either too fast or too slow. It never keeps right time. It is not many years when our educated young men had lost themselves in imitating the English, in their language, dress, manners, etc. They were not mindful of their own heritage. Some of them felt ashamed to talk to their own countrymen in their language. They were ever ready to quote Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe and Wordsworth but they felt no love for Valmiki, Kalidasa, Khusro or Anis. Then there came a time when under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the

national movement took a new turn and the craze for imitating the British began to wane. But now I notice that a number of my countrymen are on the verge of making another mistake. Previously they were on one brink of the precipice and now they want to jump over to the other extreme. By Indian nationalism it is now meant that we should forget the English language and literature and that we should have nothing to do with Milton or Shakespeare. From certain quarters I hear that in order to be true nationalists we should have no tinge of modern civilisation in us. I believe there is nobody here who holds these views. But if there is any I must remind him that just as the previous position was wrong, this latter position will also be in the same category. In the ineffaceable words of the Buddha *via* media is the only tangible reality. Just as it was not proper for you to lose yourself in the slavish love of western civilisation or literature to the extent that you might forget the grand and proud civilisation of your own country, similarly, it would be wrong to put yourself in a cage so that no ray of the light of western learning and civilisation may enter it. Do not forget that you can seal all your worldly possessions within national and geographical limits but no seal can be put on learning and civilisation. They are outside the pale of boundaries, and seals are of no avail there. For them there are no territorial limits. They are above nationalities. They are free from the stains of race, colour or factions. They might have originated in any part of the world but they are now the common heritage of mankind and are the joint property of all countries and nations. No doubt, Shakespeare was born in England but the immortal works of Shakespeare are for all countries. Even if England wants it she cannot keep Shakespeare to herself. Do you think that the dramas of Kalidas were also Indian nationals just as Kalidas was ? Do you think no foreigner has a claim on them ?

Friends, in the advancement of nations there is no greater hindrance than narrow-mindedness. It is our duty to keep ourselves free from this disease in this new era of independence which has just begun. There is no other disease so dangerous for the healthy growth of national life. It makes it appearance in every field of thought and action. Like an actor it masquerades in disguise. In the domain of religion it appears in the form of blind faith and wants to deceive us in the name of orthodoxy. In politics

it wants to overpower us in the guise of nationalism. In learning and culture it makes an appeal to us in the name of our nation and country. It behoves us not to be taken in by these fictitious names. We must remember that the root cause of all this is nothing but narrow-mindedness.

We have to keep in mind that the nationalism propagated in the nineteenth century Europe is all shattered and the world is sick of the bounds of narrow nationalism. It is anxious to break those shackles. Instead of small cooped up nationalities the world wants to build supernationalism. Obviously, there is no room for narrow-mindedness in this modern age. We shall find a secure place in the comity of nations only if we are international-minded and tolerant.

It is possible that other nations may have to learn new lessons for broadening their outlook and for cultivating a spirit of tolerance. But so far as India is concerned we can say with pride and glory that it is the main trait of our ancient civilisation, and that we have been steeped in it for thousands of years. In other countries differences of thought and action led to mutual warfare and bloodshed but in India they were resolved in a spirit of compromise and toleration. Here every kind of faith, every kind of culture, every mode of living was allowed to flourish and find its own salvation.

From the dawn of history Indian mind has been comprehensive, and tolerant of every kind of thought. It admitted every kind of faith and accommodated all shades of opinion. It was ready to offer hospitality to every new-comer. New caravans of various peoples and cultures arrived here and found their resting places. Its orbit of social life was not shut on any creed or religion. The highest school of Vedantism flourished side by side with the agnosticism and atheism. Today the world is wonderstruck at the vast all-comprehensive nature of Indian philosophy. There is no school of philosophical thought which is not found here. What we actually do not find is the clash of opinions or the breaking of heads merely because of the differences of opinion. This is the one grand feature of ancient Indian culture which has been recognised by a great many thinkers of the modern world. They candidly avow that this is the great message of ancient Indian civilisation. The world has yet to learn it. In this connection I shall quote from Dr. Radhakrishnan, the famous Indian

author, the well-chosen and balanced words which he has used in his valuable book entitled—*Indian Philosophy* :

> "The explanation of the miscellaneous character of the Hindu religion, which embraces all the intermediate regions of thought and belief from the wandering fancies of savage superstitions to the highest insight of daring thought, is here. From the beginning the Aryan religion was expansive, self-developing and tolerant. It went on accommodating itself to the new forces it met with in its growth. In this can be discerned a refined sense of true humility and sympathetic understanding. The Indian refused to ignore the lower religions and fight them out of existence. He did not possess the pride of the fanatic that his was the one true religion. If a god satisfies the human mind in its own way, it is a form of truth. None can lay hold upon the whole of truth. It can be won only by degrees, partially and provisionally."*

If liberality of thought and toleration are the most previous heritage of ancient Indian civilisation, shall we not prove worthy inheritors of this great heritage ? Shall we let that kind of narrow-mindedness raise its ugly head which is in the air today ? Today when all the advanced nations of the world are looking upto India for her ancient message of toleration and broad-mindedness, shall we, too, engrossing ourselves in sectionalism degrade ourselves to the extent that we may have to learn this lesson from others ? Today India is free. There is no outside pressure to check her. She can have any kind of mental mould she pleases. Will it be exclusive, of which the world is sick today, or will it be all-inclusive which has been the characteristic of Indian culture throughout the ages ? The eyes of the whole world are turned towards us. It is for us now either to disappoint or to carry a message of hope to the distressed world.

**Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, 2nd edn., page 119.

21

EDUCATION AND NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

It is universally recognised today that a system of national education is one of the fundamental tasks which faces any government. Not only is the existing condition of society determine by the quality of individuals composing it but its future as well. Nothing has a more important bearing on the quality of the individual than the type of education imparted. A truly liberal and humanitarian education may transform the outlook of the people and set it on the path of progress and prosperity, while an ill-conceived or unscientific system might destory all the hopes which have cherished by generations of pioneers in the cause of national freedom.

India is today on the threshold of freedom. It is, therefore, imperative that we survey the prevalent systems of education in order to find out how far they meet our national requirements. There can be no denying that the existing system of education was shaped by non-nationals in non-national interests. Macaulay is primarily responsible for our existing educational methods and ideals. He never concealed the fact that his chief aim was to create in India men who in training, outlook and loyalties would be devoted to the interests of Great Britain. Nevertheless, the great services which the existing system of education has rendered

*Press Conference, February 18, 1947.

to the Indian people need not be denied. It opened to them a new world of science and modern technology. It inculcated a progressive spirit and brought Indian educational standards in line with the standards obtaining elsewhere. It has led to a re-awakening of the national spirit and a growth of modern and progressive outlook in all affairs of the world. There is equally no denying that this system has led to the creation of a small intelligentsia separated from the mass of the Indian people. It has also at times tended to divorce the educated class from the currents of India's traditional life. Dazzled by the achievements of the West, it has at times encouraged a tendency to disown or look down upon our national heritage. It has also tended to encourage fissiparous tendencies. The greatest charge against the present system of education is that it has not led to the development of a national mind.

Macaulay's contempt for oriental studies is well known. History has not justified the sweeping condemnation which Macaulay extended to them. Nor can history justify the method which Macaulay adopted for the promulgation of learning in this land. Macaulay's contention that Sanskrit and Persian were unsuited to be the medium of instruction in India is no doubt correct, but English could serve the purpose no better. It is true that the different Indian Provincial languages were not at the time sufficiently developed to serve as the medium of instruction but there can be no doubt that a National Government would have taken these languages in hand and gradually developed them to serve the purpose. In any case, the Indian languages today have attained a development where they can serve as the medium of instruction upto the highest stage. The experiment of imparting instruction in the mother tongue upto the matriculation standard has already been tried with success and the time has come when the process must be extended further and all education in the land made accessible to the people in their own language.

All such development, however, presupposes a sound system of basic education. If the foundations have not been truly and firmly laid, no abiding superstructure can be built. The whole edifice of education and culture ultimately rests upon the teaching imparted in the early stages. In India, this has been unfortunately neglected in a way which cannot be too strongly condemned. Education has often been left in the charge of persons who do not

possess the minimum qualifications for it. Now can they be blamed for the profession of teaching has been debased against the best traditions of the land. In the past the status of the teacher in Indian society was an exalted one. He might not have been wealthy but his comparative poverty was compensated by the need of respect and prestige which the profession of teaching carried with it. Today, unfortunately all, this has changed, and the teacher, especially in primary stages, is considered as hardly better than an inferior servant. Any programme for reconstruction of education must therefore place in the forefront the task of improving the status and condition that the New National Government of India will recognise this as one of its first and foremost tasks.

It is not necessary to go into the details of the scheme for reorganisation of basic education as that has already been sufficiently discussed in the press and on the platform. It will suffice to say that the basic scheme of education will go a long way towards meeting some of the points indicated above. This report popularly known as the Sargent Report not only ensures an improvement in the status of teachers in all stages but also lays down the criteria along which education for citizenship should proceed. The emphasis on the development of education through the mother tongue has also been sufficiently recognised in that scheme. It is a matter for pleasure that the Provinces are making managements for giving immediate effect to the scheme and have requested co-operation from the Centre. The Educational Adviser has invitations from most of the Provinces and is shortly going out on tour. I propose to call a conference of Provincial Ministers and representatives of universities in order to plan out a comprehensive programme of work.

One question on which the report has not come to any definite conclusion is that of religious instructions in schools. I know that there is a sharp difference of opinion among experts on this question. Two committees appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Education have submitted contrary reports. In the past a majority of educationists placed the emphasis on purely secular education. This was true of Great Britain and in Russia, after the Soviet Revolution, there was a positive anti-religious temper in educational policy. Those who hold a different view emphasise that exprience tends to prove the futility of education from which

religion has been divorced. Today in Great Britain a system of education has been evolved under the supervision of the State. It is reported that Russia also has in the recent past recognised the value of religious instruction and taken steps to that effect.

The Government will have to give proper weight to both these points of view and come to a decision on the question. One thing, which, however, has to be remembered, is that in India the emphasis on religion has been and is greater than in other countries. Not only the past traditions of India but also the present temper of the people tend to emphasise the importance of religious instruction. If the Government decide that religious instruction should be included in education, it seems imperative that the religious instruction offered should be of the best type. The religious instruction often imparted in India in private institution is of a kind which instead of broadening the outlook and inculcating a spirit of toleration and goodwill to all men produces exactly the opposite results. It is likely that under State supervision even denominational teaching can be imparted in a more liberal spirit than under private control. The aim of all religious teaching should be to make men more tolerant and broad-minded and it is my opinion that this can be more effectively done if the State takes charge of the question than if it is left to private initiative. I will indicate the decision of the Government on this question at an early date.

Another point on which I want to express my opinion is in respect of the educational activities of missionary societies. Friends from England have sent me cuttings from papers in which this question has been raised. There is no doubt that missionary societies have played a very important part in the dissemination of modern education and the development of the modern outlook. This is true not only of India but of other countries of the East as well. I can speak with personal knowledge of the Middle East countries. Before 1907 the only institution imparting modern higher education in Turkey was Robert College run by the American Mission and its contribution to the awakening of Turkey can never be forgotten. Modern education in Syria was largely the work of missionaries who founded three colleges in Beirut of which the most famous was the American Missionary College (Al Kulliatus-Suria). Higher education in Iraq is similarly indebted to 'Kulliya Qudais Yusuf', i.e., St. Joseph's College.

The same story is repeated in Egypt. It is true that Mohammad Ali, the Great founded in the first quarter of the 19th century overseas scholarships for Europe under the name of 'Irsaliat' but most of the important personalities in Egyptian renaissance are products of the Missionary College of Beirut. The well-known modern Arabic author, George Zaidan, whose *History of Islamic Civilisation* has been translated into English by Nicholson, was a student of the Missionary College of Beirut. The Sarroof Brothers, well-known editors of 'Al Muqattam' and 'Al Moqtataf' also received their education and their inspiration of service from the same missionary college.

These missionary societies helped not only in the spread of modern education but, what is more, contributed greatly to the development of indigenous languages. They were also in many cases the pioneers in oriental research and scholarship. Vondyke came as an American missionary to Beirut when he was only 18 and devoted himself to the development of modern education in Syria. The Scientific series which he published under the name of 'An Naqsh Fil Hajar' is one of the best scientific works in Arabic of the 20th century. Perhaps the best modern book on Astronomy in Arabic is his work entitled 'Al Hai-at.' I do not want to dilate here on the services they have rendered in China, Japan and other South-East Asian countries.

New education in India also began with the work of the missionary societies. The East India Company had at first been in favour of oriental education and it was through the efforts of the Serampore Mission that the foundations of European Education in India were laid. Since that time missionary societies have kept up their educational work and brought learning to millions who, but for their help, would have remained immersed in illiteracy and ignorance.

Their work in the development of Indian languages has also been of the greatest value. One of the first standard works in Urdu prose is a translation of the Bible that they completed in the beginning of the 19th century. Urdu has made tremendous strides in the last 150 years and yet this early translation of the Bible remains a standard of Urdu prose.

With such valuable examples of the work done by the missionaries in the past, there is no reason why their work on the same humanitarian lines should not receive equal appreciation in

the future. It is only in respect of one problem that difficulties arise at times. This is on the vexed question of conversions and especially conversions *en masse.* World opinion has undergone great changes on the question and responsible missionaries have themselves come to recognise that mass conversions are in reality no conversion at all. Christ himself emphasised the baptism of the spirit rather than formal baptism by water, and missionaries would be true to the spirit of Christ if they preached His message of humanity instead of attempting to convert people to the dogma of a Church. If all missionary societies adopt this enlightened outlook, there is no reason why independent India should in any way hesitate to accept the services which it is theirs to offer.

I would like to say a few words about another problem. The Deputy Educational Adviser (Resettlement) informs me that during the war two million soldiers were made literate by the Army through the use of the Roman script. Experience showed that they could acquire a working knowledge of Hindustani in three to six months' time. I am told that this would have been impossible to achieve if the Devanagri or the Urdu script had been used. Roman has thus solved the problem of finding alternative scripts for men of different provinces. If these men who have been made literate during their service in the Army are not to lapse into illiteracy, we must provide them with suitable literature in Roman Hindustani. There is a great demand for such literature and the Department is considering how to meet this demand.

It is desirable that every Indian should learn both Devanagri and Urdu scripts. This will, however, take time and till this is achieved, it would be worth considering whether the use of Roman as a supplementary script, in addition to Devanagri and Urdu, in central educational publications may not be a temporary expedient. There are millions of Bengalees, Madrasis, Oriyas, Assamese and men speaking other languages who can understand Hindustani and pick it up quickly but find an impediment in their progress because of the script. This, however, is a question which ought to be considered by educationists all over the land.

I will now indicate some of the main items which may be taken up in the near future :

1. The time has come for setting up a National Museum

where the finest representation of Indian philosophy, literature and art may be preserved. The first step in this direction will be the setting up of a National Cultural Trust as proposed recently by the Central Advisory Board of Education.

2. There should be provision for fundamental research work, and for this, definite sums should be allocated every year. It is obvious that there can be no advance in either industry or technology without fundamental research work. The scope of such research should, however, be extended and cover not only the scientific subjects but also the humanities including philosophy, the social sciences, anthropology, etc. The Co-ordination Committee of the Cabinet has approved, in principle, of a grant of Rs. 75,00,000 for fundamental research work in the next five years.
3. (a) There is also a proposal for the appointment of a committee to prepare a Guide for Teachers for the new scheme of education. While the Central Government do not wish to impose uniformity but to leave the greatest possible margin of freedom to the Provinces, there should be some indication of the general lines on which this education is to be imparted.

   (b) The question of preparing some kind of a generalised curriculum may also be considered. Any fixed curriculum has the tendency of imposing rigid uniformity and therefore the preparation of this curriculum should be undertaken with the greatest possible care.

4. The Government of India are considering the question of making grants to educational experimental institutions without waiting to verify the results of such experiments. There are not many institutions of this kind and most of them have been unable to give their best as financial difficulties have hampered them from the very outset. It is not suggested that the Government of India should be lavish or careless in making grants but wherever genuine efforts of this kind are in evidence, the Government

should come to the help of the institution at the initial stages so that lack of funds may not hinder the institutions from carrying out their experiments. Two institutions of this type which have recently received Government help are the Jamia Milia University, Delhi, and Shantiniketan in Bengal. It is, however, obviously impossible to mention all such institutions.

5. Another field which requires immediate attention is the development of archaeological studies in India. We have as yet no complete history of India and it will have to be reconstructed from the monuments and other archaeological remains which are scattered all over the land.
6. Disraeli very rightly recognised that a democracy has no future unless it educates its masses. In India, the problem arises with even greater intensity. The problem of mass education here is of vast proportions and will require time for its solution. It cannot, however, wait and modern science has placed in our hands effective instruments in the form of broadcasting and the film. I am considering schemes by which they may be utilised to the fullest extent for broadening the mind of the masses and opening up a new world of knowledge to them.

I will conclude by stressing once again the imperative necessity of reforming and expanding our system of education. Education should have the highest priority in our national budget and should take its place immediately after food and clothing. In fact, a proper system of education is necessary in order to tackle satisfactorily even these problems. I have every hope that we shall be able to make up our leeway by a determined and concerted effort and place education in India on a par with education in other civilised countries of the world

22

TRAINING OF TEACHERS*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

India which has taken its place in the comity of free nations of the world has to march forward in every field of our national life with alacrity, but you will agree that none of these fields is as important as the educational field. At present, the percentage of literacy in India is only 14.7, that is, out of every hundred nearly 85 persons are totally illiterate. Not counting the population of the provinces which have ceded from the Indian Union, the remaining population, according to the last census, is in the neighbourhood of 24,02,54,500. Of these, 2,93,72,000 are school-going children—between the ages of six and eleven. These statistics show that even if we ignore persons above the age of eleven we have still to make immediate arrangements for the education of about 3 crores of school-going children between the ages of six and eleven.

I am sure you will agree with me that this state of affairs is most deplorable and no civilised Government can tolerate it. If we are unable to make arrangements for the primary education of about 30 millions of our children, all our nation-building schemes will, *ipso facto*, become valueless. The only way out, therefore, is to try and lift millions of these children from the depths of neglect and ignorance immediately.

The question is how best to solve this problem. The greatest

*At the Opening of the Central Institute of Education, December 19, 1947.

hurdle facing us is the lack of trained teachers. Suppose, we take three teachers per 100 children, we will require a minimum of 9 lakhs of trained teachers for 30 million school-going children. If we want to break this vicious circle, we should not postpone our educational schemes simply because there are not sufficient trained teachers. Rather we should mobilise as teachers all the educated persons available, and at the same time carry on the training of teachers with the greatest possible speed, so that trained teachers can be made available in sufficient numbers in the shortest possible time.

The former Government of India had set up a Central Advisory Board of Education which the present Government has continued. This Board had in the year 1944 submitted a detailed report on the post-war educational development. One of the basic recommendations in this Report was the establishment of new training institutions for teachers both by the Central and the Provincial Governments. Accordingly, all the Provincial Governments as well as the Central Government while formulating their five-year post-war programme had this recommendation in view. A number of such training institutions have already been opened and are still being opened in the various parts of the country.

The educational plan of the Central Government included a proposal to establish a Central Institute of Education located at Delhi. In 1945, the details of this scheme were finalised and Rs. 18,00,000 for its buildings and Rs. 2,45,000 for equipment, etc., were set aside. It was proposed that the building of the Institute should provide class-room accommodation for 300 students of both sexes and hostel accommodation for 150 students. It was also decided to have the Institute within the University grounds and regard it as a Faculty of Education of the Delhi University. It is estimated that when the scheme is in full operation, its annual recurring expenditure will be in the neighbourhood of Rs. 2 lakh. This sum has been sanctioned by the Government.

It was decided in 1945 that this scheme should start from 1946-47, but it could not be taken in hand and a full year was thus wasted. The building programme was held up owing to the non-availability of building materials. This year, however, it was decided to start the institution in a rented building.

Accordingly, the house in which we are at present assembled, was acquired in July last; but we could not proceed with this work earlier owing to the recent unfortunate disturbances in Delhi. However, I am now happy that we have surmounted all our difficulties and that today this Institute is being opened by Your Excellency.

The teachers trained at this Institute will naturally be employed in the teaching institutions in the Centrally Administered Areas. But while gauging the real importance of the Institute, we should not give undue importance to this aspect of the Institute. The function of the Institute is something greater than this. It will turn out teachers who will be 'model teachers' for provinces but over and above all this, this Institute will be a research centre for solving new educational problems of the country and will be a beacon light for the training institutions of the country. The problems facing the Institute will be : how to correlate the different systems of basic education; how to reform the present system of examinations; and how to mould the primary education of a child so that he is given full opportunity to develop his individuality and also to equip himself to keep abreast of world affairs. This and similar other problems will come before the Institute and it will have to find ways and means of solving them.

We have had to start this Institute in a building which is hardly suitable for it but there was no alternative owing to the acute shortage of suitable houses. This house, as Your Excellency can see for yourself, is not big enough for our requirements even with the two tents which we have had to pitch to supplement this accommodation. Because of this limited accommodation, our work and progress will necessarily be greatly hampered and restricted. We have every hope, however, that these difficulties will not hamper our progress for long and that soon this Institute will blossom forth and take its rightful place.

Your Excellency, we are fully aware of the keen interest which you have evinced in the social and educational activities of this country. We are deeply grateful to you for the zeal, the promptness and the personal interest which you have shown in dealing with the relief of the unfortunate and afflicted people from the Punjab. To show our appreciation it was only natural that I should have asked you to perform the opening ceremony of this Institute. I am thankful to you for your kindness in accepting

my invitation. I will now request Your Excellency to perform the ceremony of opening the Central Institute of Education, Delhi. By pressing the electric button you will open the doors of the Institute. May the gates of darkness and ignorance which have prevented light from reaching the millions of my countrymen be thrown open very soon in the same manner.

23

CONCEPT OF MAN IN THE EAST AND THE WEST*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

In the last six thousand years or more; the human-being has travelled over a vast region from his early beginning in primitive society. This period has seen man overcome many hidden obstacles and meet the challenge of inanimate nature and the animate world. Inspite of all the vicissitudes which man has had to face during this period, there has, on the whole, been continuous and steady progress in wresting from nature some of her greatest secrets. Veil after veil has been torn asunder from the hidden face of nature and secrets that are still unknown are yielding to his quest.

While man's triumphant progress in unveiling the face of nature has been steady and continuous, can we say with equal confidence that he has succeeded in unveiling the lineaments of his own self ? Can we say that after six thousand years of quest of the Real, man today sees himself as he essentially is ? I think you will agree that we have to make a sad confession in this matter. The mirror that man has fashioned reflects all aspects of the world but not his own inner self. We have to admit that man has not yet been able to form a clear picture of his own nature. The secrets of the universe are clearer to him than the

*Inaugural speech at the Symposium on the Concept of Man and the Philosophy of Education in the East and the West, New Delhi, December 13, 1951.

secrets of the self. For some three thousand years or more, philosophers have again and again asked what man, is, whence he comes and whither he goes. The questions still remain largely unanswered. It is obvious that man cannot achieve a satisfactory solution of the problems of the individual, society, nations and international relations until he knows clearly the nature of his own self and determines what the place of man is in the vastness of the universe.

The basic issue before you is the consideration of this problem. You have met to discuss the Concept of Man as it has been enunciated by thinkers in the East and the West. I would, at the very beginning, like to emphasise that in speaking of the East and the West, we are thinking only of certain special features in the thought of these regions. This cannot and does not mean that there are not large areas of common and agreed ground. Man all over the world has adopted common methods of reasoning and thought. The human reason is one and identical. Human feelings are largely similar. The human will operates more or less in the same manner in similar situations everywhere. It is therefore natural that the human way of looking at himself and the world is largely common in different parts of the world. Their attitudes towards the unknown mysteries of existence are also largely similar. The Greeks who looked with admiration and awe upon the peaks of Olympus shared the same feelings as the Indian who meditated in the valleys of the Himalayas and looked upon its eternal snow.

Inspite of large areas of agreement, human minds in different regions of the world have adopted a different approach to some of their common problems. Even where the approach has not been different, there has been a tendency to place a different emphasis on the different aspects of common problems and common solutions. No two situations are exactly alike. It was inevitable that people in different regions should pay greater attention to different aspects of common problems. It is on account of such differences in emphasis that we describe a particular mode of thought as characteristic of a particular nation or region. It is from this point of view that I will try to formulate what are the differences that characterise the East from the West. I think you will all agree that even where the solutions are similar in pattern and outline, there are differences in shade and colour which justify us in calling some of the solutions Eastern

and others Western.

There are, as I have said, many points in common between the views of philosophers in the East and the West but there is one distinction in emphasis between India, Greece and China which strikes us from the very beginning of recorded history. In India, the emphasis of philosophy has, on the whole, been on the inner experience of man. Philosophers here have sought to understand man's inner nature, and in this pursuit have gone beyond the regions of sense, intellect and even reason and sought to assert the identity of man with a deep hidden Reality. In Greece, the philosopher has been interested mainly in understanding the nature of the world outside. He has sought to determine the place of man in the outer world. His view has therefore been, on the whole, more extrovert than in India. In China, on the other hand, philosophers have not worried about the inner nature of man nor about external nature but concentrated on the study of man relation to his fellows. These differences in orientation have exerted a profound influence on later develoments of philosophy in each of these regions. We find therefore that there are striking differences in their respective concepts of man.

The Greeks approached the concept of man from an external point of view. Hence, we find that from the earliest times, Greek Philosophy devotes far greater attention to what man *does* rather than to what man *is*. It is true that some of the earlier Greek philosophers thought of man as essentially a spiritual entity, and we find that this is perhaps the prevailing mode of thought up to the time of Plato. With the advent of Aristotle, there began, however, a new orientation in which the attention is diverted from the idea of man to man's activities in the world here and now. Under the influence of Artistole who defined man as a rational animal, Philosophy became more positive. In course of time, this positive, empirical and scientific attitude became the prevailing climate of thought in the West. Rationality distinguishes man from other animals, and it is through the exercise of rationality that he has advanced far beyond his early animal origin. Nevertheless, he remains essentially and fundamentally a progressive animal. Rarely has this thought been expressed so beautifully as by the German Philosopher, Riehl. While he admits that man has descended from the animal, he points out that he has now reached a stage where he must look above and not below.

"Thou art the Imperishable, the Supreme to be realised,
Thou art the ultimate resting place of the universe,
Thou art the undying guardian of the eternal law,
Thou art the Primal Person." (XI : 18)

Similarly, we find that according to the Sufis, man is a wave of the boundless sea that is God. He is a ray of the Sun that is God. Man can regard himself as different from the Eternal Being only so long as his vision is clouded by the evil of ignorance. Once there is enlightenment, all these distinctions dissolve and man recognises himself as a moment in the being of the Eternal.

The concept of man which the East has evolved regards man as not merely an animal superior to all earthly creatures but as essentially different in nature. Man is not the first among equals but has a being which is higher than that of any other creature. He is not only a progressive animal, but reveals in his being the lineaments of God Himself. In fact, his nature is so high and elevated that nothing higher is conceivable to human reason. In the words of the Chhandogya Upanishad :

"That is Reality. That is Atman (Soul). That art thou." (9 : 4).

This doctrine has also been beautifully expressed in Arabic :

Man arafa nafsahu faqad arafa robbahu
"He who knows himself knows God."

The same principle, when further developed, gives rise to the idea that man is not an isolated individual but contains in himself the entire universe. In the words of the Gita,

"Here today, behold the whole universe, moving and unmoving and whatever else thou desirest to see, O Gudakesa (Arjuna), are all unified in My body." (XI : 7).

A Sufi poet has expressed the same concept in the Arabic verse :

"*Watahsab annaka jarmum saghir*
Wa fika antavi alemun akbaru".

> "Thou thinkest that thou art a small body : thou knowest not that a universe greater than the physical world is contained in thee."

It will be readily agreed that there can be no higher concept of man. God marks the highest limit of human thought. By identifying man with God, the Eastern concept of man elevates him to godhead. Man has therefore no other goal but to re-establish his identity with God. He thus becomes superior to the entire creation.

II

We have till now discussed the concept of man from the point of view of the philosophies in the East and the West. We now wish to review briefly what religion has to say on the question. If we consider the attitude of Judaism and Christianity, we find a clear statement in the Old Testament that God created man in his own image. From this it would follow that man shares in the attributes of God. A strong element of spiritual mysticism has characterised the attitude of Christianity and has acted as a check the predominance of extreme materialistic tendencies.

In Islam, we find traces of the influence of the same outlook. In fact, the Quran has gone a step further in its exaltation of man. The Quran proclaims that not only is man created in the image of God but is His regent on earth. In speaking of the creation of Adam, God says :

> "*Inni jaelunfil arde khalifa* (2 : 29)
> "I want to create my viceroy on earth."

This idea of the viceroyalty of man profoundly influenced the Arab philosophers. Two things may be noted in this connection. As regent of God on earth, man has an immediate affinity with Him. This also makes man superior to all creation and makes him master not only of animal life but also of the forces of nature itself. The Quran proclaims again and again :

> "Whatever is on the earth or in the heavens has been made subject to man." (XIII : 45).

It is generally recognised that Aristotle deeply influenced most of the Arab philosophers, but even in their interpretation of Aristotle, they shows clear indications of the influence of the idea of man's viceroyalty of God. Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) are metaphysically Aristotelians but their spiritual orientation in Islam makes them recognise that since man shares in God's attributes, there is no limit to the heights which he can attain in both knowledge and power. Muslim scholastics like All Ghazzali, Ar Razi, Ar Raghib Ispahani and others have further elaborated this idea in their various philosophical writings.

We must, however, admit that while the conception of man in both Vedanta and Sufism gives him a lofty status, neither of these philosophies can escape the charge that if, on the one hand, they set no limit to human capacity, they, on the other hand, imply an element of fatalism that circumscribes man's power. The explanation of this paradox is to be found in their concept of the relation of man to God. Since man is an emanation of divinity, whatever man does is ultimately God's doing : whatever happens is due to the will of God. From this it is but another step to think of man as a mere toy in the hands of fate.

It has been said that while the concepts of Vedanta and Sufism in their pure form have been responsible for some of the highest spiritual attainments of man, they have to some extent acted as an impediment to human progress on the secular plane. The emphasis on the unity of man with God made society relatively insensitive to human suffering, as such suffering was regarded as mere illusion. We therefore find that Eastern societies have often been indifferent to the removal of the causes of social malaise. This explains why some modern thinkers are seeking for a formulation of the philosophy of Vedanta without its fatalism.

We find a similar paradox in the Western concept of man. A philosophy of materialism would, *prima facie*, seem to indicate a determinist outlook on life. Since the law of causality reigns thoughout the material world, the same law would tend to hold in the field of human action. We find the culmination of this tendency in the psychological theories of the Behaviourists. The Western mind, however, asserted itself against such a deterministic concept and exhibited an energy of spirit which has rarely been equalled and perhaps never surpassed.

One of the main tasks of the present Symposium should be to examine how we can combine these two concepts which have so profoundly influenced both philosophy and religious outlook in the East and the West. The Eastern conception of man's status, if combined with the Western concept of progress, would open out to man the possibility of infinite advance without the risks implicit in the misuse of science. It may also indicate a way out of the fatalism which otherwise seems to follow from the Eastern conception of man's identity with God. The Eastern conception of man's status is not only consistent with the progress of Western science, but in fact offers an intelligible explanation of how scientific progress is possible. If man were merely a developed animal, there would be a limit to his advancement. If, however, he shares in God's infinity, there can be no limit to the progress he can achieve. Science can then march from triumph to triumph and solve many of the riddles which trouble man even to this day.

There is a further reason why a synthesis of the Eastern and the Western concepts of man is of the greatest importance to man's future, Science in itself is neutral. Its discoveries can be used equally to heal and to kill. It depends upon the outlook and mentality of the user whether science will be used to create a new heaven on earth or to destroy the world in a common conflagration. If we think of man as only a progressive animal, there is nothing to prevent his using science to further interests based on the passions he shares in common with animals. If, however, we think of him as an emanation of God, he can use science only for the furtherance of God's purpose, that is the achievement of peace on earth and goodwill to all men.

III

I have tried to indicate that the Eastern and Western concepts of man are in some ways complementary. If the one has emphasised the intrinsic excellence of his being, the other has laid stress on the progress he *has* achieved and *can* achieve through his own efforts. If the one has stressed the spiritual elements in his nature, the other has pointed out that spiritual excellence must also have a requisite physical basis. If inspite of differences in emphasis, the Western and the Eastern concepts of man can

be reconciled, there is no reason why the philosophy of education in these two regions should not also be fitted into a wider philosophy of education for the world.

In both the East and the West, the prevalent system of education have given rise to various paradoxes. In the East, we find a disproportionate emphasis on individual salvation. Man sought knowledge as a means to his own redemption. The Eastern mode of thought with its pre-occupation with individual salvation has at times paid inadequate attention to social welfare and progress. In the West, on the contrary, there has been a greater emphasis on the need of social progress. In fact, considerations of social welfare have at times led to the growth of totalitarian societies in which the individual has been suppressed. Today when East and West have been brought nearer each other through the operations of science, it is necessary that the bias, whether in favour of the individual or of society, should be rectified and a system of education evolved which will give due regard to both individual and social values.

Herein lies the importance of education in the modern world. Experience has shown that education can profoundly affect the development of individuals and, through individuals, of societies If the individual is not an integrated personality, society cannot be harmonious. The function of education in the modern world is therefore to build up integrated individuals in an integrated society and the concept of both the East and the West must contribute to such a development.

Before I conclude, there is one other problem to which I would like to draw your attention. The question often arises whether education is a means or an end. I would say that on the whole the West has looked upon education as a means while the East has looked upon it as an end. If education is regarded as a means, the question arises, what is the end for which it is the means. The West has often regarded social welfare as the end, but social welfare is a concept which can be interpreted in different ways. In any case, the tendency to regard education as a means leads to some diminution in the value of education. I am inclined to think that the Eastern concept shows a truer understanding of its real nature. By regarding education as an end in itself we recognise knowledge to be one of the ultimate values. I do not think that any Western philosopher would deny the

importance of knowledge but its value cannot be fully appreciated unless education is recognised as an end in itself. Further, such recognition would raise the status of man. From this point of view also I am inclined to think that we should look upon education as an end rather than as a mere means to some external good.

IV

To sum up. In the Eastern concept, man as an emanation of God shares in His infinite attribute and is capable of achieving mastery over the entire creation. In the Western concept, man is no doubt an animal but there is no limit to the progress that he can achieve in the material field. His scientific achievements are visible proof of his superiority over the rest of creation, and have given him domination over the sky, sea and earth. We may therefore say that the Western practice has substantiated the claim which the Eastern theory has made in respect of man. Since, however, the Western concept, has not emphasised the spiritual origin of man, his triumphs in the scientific field have themselves become a source of danger to his survival. If therefore the achievements of western science can be utilised in the Eastern spirit of man's affinity with God, science would become an instrument not of destruction but for the establishment of human prosperity, peace and progress.

I hope this Symposium of philosophers from the East and the West will succeed in reconciling the concept of man as a spiritual entity with the concept of man as capable in infinite material progress and thus help in the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

24

INDIA AND UNESCO*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

After the experience of two world wars within the course of barely twenty-five years, thinking men and women all over the world realise, as never before, that there must be a change in the outlook of man to avert the calamity of a future disaster. It was out of this universal desire to find an instrument for the settlement of disputes without resort to war that there arose the United Nations with renewed hope for afflicted humanity.

All conflicts have their ultimate origin in the mind of man and it was felt that unless the causes of fear, suspicion, distress and jealousy could be eradicated from human minds no efforts by politicians and statesmen could remove the possibility of future wars. At the time of the preliminary discussions for setting up a United Nations Organisation, it was therefore decided that there should also be an organisation for promoting closer collaboration among different peoples of the world in the fields of education, science and culture. Accordingly, Unesco was set up to achieve these ends.

At the time of the constitution of Unesco, it was realised that co-operation and understanding among nations could be built only if there was co-operation and understanding among the different elements within the nation itself. If within a nation itself

*Speech at the Inauguration of the National Commission of Unesco, New Delhi, April 9, 1949.

there were divergent elements whose differing points of view had not been fully co-ordinated, such a nation could hardly serve as a harmonious unit in the international setting. Experience showed that there was not only colossal ignorance about different nations but in many cases members of the same nation were ignorant of one another's attitudes, beliefs, customs and faith. This was an experience which was almost universal except in the case of a very few small and homogenous nations. Further, it was felt that closer co-operation between different elements in our national life would lead to a promotion of activities in all the fields of education, science and culture. The constitution of Unesco therefore provided that every nation should set up as soon as possible a National Commission or co-operating body for furthering the aims and objects of Unesco within the national unit. It was also felt than such activities could be carried out better by a non-official agency than by the Government or anybody set up directly under the Government auspices.

The constitution of Unesco provides that only States can be members. This guarantees that there will be no possibility of adding to international complications through its activities. There is, however, another aspect of the question which cannot be ignored. The nature of education, science and culture is such that their cause can be served better by private and voluntary agencies. This is the reason why Unesco constitution insists that there should be voluntary bodies or National Commissions to perform its functions in the national field.

Unfortunately, the experience of the last three years has not fully justified the hopes which were raised by the establishment of the United Nations Organisation. In spite of the initial agreement with which it started, it has today become the arena for struggles between rival blocks. It is true that the struggle is yet only a cold war. This is, however, little consolation to those who seek peace on an eduring basis. It is tragic that even today nations have not given up the old attitudes which so often led to war.

The one gleam of hope offered in this dark picture today is the manner in which Unesco, an allied organisation of the United Nations, has been attempting to establish better relations among human beings in the fields of education, science and culture. It is obvious that in the realm of material clash of interests, compromise

is difficult while in the fields of the creative spirit, co-operation and compromise are not only possible, but are the natural law. The division of material wealth leads to a diminution in its quantity while the distribution of spiritual wealth leads to mutual enrichment. Unesco has also rightly recognised that all conflicts, even in the material field, have their ultimate origin in the mind of man. It was therefore felt that unless the causes of fear, suspicion, distress and jealousy could be eradicated from the human mind, no efforts by the politicians and statesmen alone could remove the possibility of future conflicts. This is the justification of Unesco as well as the reason why it has become a rallying ground for the faith and hope of all who want to avert the disaster of a third world war.

In its brief life of three years, Unesco has already made considerable progress towards the achievement of its objects. The very fact of associating together a large number of people of different nations with marked differences in language, background, social habits and outlook is a considerable achievement. The obligation under the constitution of holding the General Conference in a different country each year has added to the burdens of the Secretariat but in spite of such initial difficulties, the progress achieved holds promise of still greater achievements in the future. In three years, the membership has increased to 44 while national commissions are either in operation or about to be inaugurated in about 35 countries. A large number of international conferences and seminars have been held under its auspices. Of the various activities in these fields, one which deserves special mention is the establishment of the Institute of Hylean Amazon. Another is the establishment of pilot projects in fundamental education in Haiti. The development of the educational section as a clearing house for ideas and experience in different parts of the world is also proving extremely helpful. The constitution of a new Division of Arts and Letters with Dr. Lin Yutang as head has also contributed to a greater exchange in cultural matters between the Asian and European countries. Recently, it was decided to set up a special centre for the Middle and Near East. It has also been decided to promote the establishment of an Institute for Arid Zones and another for the study of conditions in high altitudes.

Unesco has also tried to contribute to a clearer analysis and understanding of the philosophical concepts as the basis of modern

civilisation. A volume on human rights is already in the press and one on the concept of democracy is under preparation. A specialised journal, *Museum*, and an official organ called *The Unesco Courier* are among its regular populations.

Unesco has helped in the organisation of work camps for both reconstruction and education in war devastated areas. It has arranged for the exchange of students and voluntary works. During 1948, over 50 million dollars were distributed in educational relief by voluntary organisations largely through its efforts. In its last conference at Beirut it decided to extend the field of reconstruction from the war devastated areas to the undeveloped or underdeveloped areas of the world in order to help in the achievement of more uniform standards throughout the world. It is expected that a concrete programme for the achievement of this end will be one of the main items before the next General Conference.

Unesco has also been helping the exchange of books by Book Coupons for countries which have a shortage of dollars. It has also helped in making scientific equipment available to countries short of such material. A Field Science Co-operation Office has recently been established in Delhi for South Asia. The East Asia Science Co-operation Office has undertaken the responsibility of allocating and distributing in that region two million dollars worth of education and engineering equipment collected by Unrra.

Another project undertaken by Unesco is the translation of great books in order to make the cultural heritage of different countries available to one another. Considerable progress has been made in exploring the possibilities of the production of cheap books. Another valuable contribution to international understanding is the project of studying the causes of tensions between different people and communities with a view to finding out methods of eradicating them. Its most ambitious venture in this field is the project to produce a scientific and cultural history of mankind.

Members will be glad to learn that ever since the foundation of Unesco, India has been playing an important part in its deliberations. She is one of the funder members and helped in the shaping of its aims and purposes. In spite of the political and other disabilities under which she then laboured, and the extremely restricted size of her delegations, she played a leading role in both

the first and the second conferences. She has been on the Executive Board from the very beginning and her representatives have made valuable contributions in almost every sphere of Unesco's activities.

During the last year, several achievements and projects of special interest to India have been undertaken. The election of Prof. Radhakrishnan as the Chairman of the Executive Board has brought an Asian to the Head of the Organisation for the first time. The Indian Delegation at the third Conference played a very important role and made valuable contributions in almost every decision taken there. Some of the Indian experts who have been associated with the special activities of Unesco during the last year may be specially mentioned. Dr. Zakir Hussain attended a meeting on Fundamental Education of Experts in Paris in April 1948, and Mr. N.K. Sidhanta attended a meeting of experts for the translation of great books. Mr. Humayun Kabir of this Ministry was invited to contribute a chapter to Unesco's volume on Human Rights as a result of the International Symposium. Mr. Lakshmanan, Director General of All India Radio was invited to attend the Technical Needs Commission Expert Committee and Mr. Kirpal of this Ministry to survey the educational and cultural needs of the refugees in the Middle East. Dr. S.K. Banerjee attended the International High Altitude Research Conference and Mr. M.S. Sundaram of this Ministry represented India in the Preparatory Conference of the universities of the World.

During the last General Conference of Unesco, there was a proposal to hold a Far Eastern Seminar on Education. The object originally considered was 'Education of War-handicapped Children,' but at the instance of India, the subject finally chosen was 'Adult Education' which is the most pressing problem facing all the Asian countries. Unesco has accepted India's invitation to hold the seminar in India. This will be its first seminar to be held in Asia and is to take place during November.

For reasons which are known to every one, it has not been possible to set up the Indian National Commission of Unesco earlier. As members are aware, the problems created by partition demanded all the energy and attention of the Government till about the middle of 1948. As soon as things started setting down, the Government appointed a Committee to consider the setting up of a Commission and after its report had been approved by the

Central Advisory Board of Education in January this year, the Government did not allow any lapse of time in setting up this Commission. It is expected that this Commission will serve as a focus of educational, scientific and cultural activities of the Nation and will contribute to the enrichment of national life in all these fields as well as better co-operation and understanding with other countries.

25

THE ROLE OF UNESCO*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Though this is the first occasion on which I have, in person, attended a session of Unesco, I may claim that in spirit I have always been with you and followed your deliberations and activities with the keenest interest and sympathy. This I have done as I feel that, in view of the disaster which threatens the future of mankind, Unesco alone offers a faint ray of hope. Mankind has, in the course of the last century, made phenomenal advances in knowledge and material prosperity but this progress has not been reflected in man's moral and political achievement. Increased knowledge has, therefore, led not only to a greater provision for comforts and victory over want and disease, but also, alas, to an increase in man's power for destruction and death. This power is so great today that, unless all men have a sense of community, it may well lead to common ruin for all. It is only through a re-education of man that we can create that sense of psychological unity and common citizenship which the technological unity achieved by the advance of modern science requires of man.

This is the reason why, in 1949, when the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco was founded, I placed with great emphasis on the importance of Unesco's work. I pointed out with regret that while the United Nations were founded for the achievement of peace and unity, the result had,

*Speech delivered at the Unesco Conference in Paris, June 1951.

in fact, been the division of the world into two wearing camps. It is true that some progress has been achieved and, in place of a multitude of nations, each struggling on its own, the United Nations present a picture of two solid blocks arrayed one against the other. Nevertheless, to any man who looks forward to co-operation and friendship among nations, this picture can bring no message of hope. It seems that the only hope lies in Unesco, which seeks to achieve unity in the field of education, science and culture, even among those who are politically divided. I feel that if Unesco could achieve its objectives and create understanding between different nations on the cultural plane, there is hope that, with time, the cultural understanding would make itself felt in the economic and political fields also.

In the course of the last two years, my hope in Unesco and my apprehensions about the United Nations have both increased. The political situation has steadily deteriorated and today the United Nations instead of being an instrument for the achievement of peace, tend to become a platform on which great powers struggle for conflicting aims. If, therefore, any hope is left, it is in Unesco, for it is only through intellectual understanding and sympathy that we may yet avert the disaster which otherwise threatens to engulf the whole of humanity.

It is true that Unesco is barely half a dozen years old. But these few years have been of immense significance for the future of man. This period has revealed fissures in our political and intellectual attitudes which, unless they are checked in time, may well involve the whole of humanity in one common ruin. It is therefore, necessary that we should attempt to evaluate what Unesco has done during these critical years and survey its past achievement so that we can map out with greater confidence the course of its future action.

The aim of Unesco is to bring nations together through education, science and culture. Ever since its foundation, Unesco has yearly passed resolutions and adopted programmes to achieve that end. One of the greatest achievements of Unesco has been to help frame a new and universal declaration of human rights which has since been adopted by the United Nations. Similarly, in the field of technical assistance to underdeveloped countries and the restoration of educational and cultural facilities in the war-devastated countries, and in the exchange of persons and ideas

between different nations, considerable progress has been achieved. Even more important is the project which Unesco seeks to adopt for the provision of fundamental education to immense areas of the world as yet without adequate facilities. It is a sad reflection on our civilisation that almost three-quarters of the adult population of the world are still unlettered. Illiteracy and ignorance directly contradict all our professions for the rights of men and constitute a threat of universal democracy, peace and progress. I should like to congratulate Unesco upon its realisation that it is only by improving the human material through education in the less fortunate areas of the world that prospects of world peace can be secured.

While no one can for a moment question the programme of Unesco in these fields, I feel sure that you, Mr. President, and you, Mr. Director General, will agree with me that Unesco cannot succeed in its objectives so long as the fear of war and destruction cripple the creative energies of man. Unless this threat can be averted, all our efforts to advance education, science and culture seem a mockery. If the world is to be saved from disaster, we must, as intelligent men and women, decide what steps Unesco can take to avoid the threat of war. It will not do to say that the questions of war and peace are primarily political and do not concern Unesco which is a body devoted to the advancement of education, science and culture. What meaning can there be in these activities if the very basis of man's existence is threatened ? Unesco has accepted its responsibilities in the matter by embodying in its constitution the recognition that since all wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

It is right and proper for Unesco to think of the education of the future generations, but unless we take steps to avert the danger which threatens us here and now, the future generations may not be in position to enjoy the fruits of its activities. To my mind it seems that the time has come when Unesco must decide whether it will reflect the political divisions which exist in the United Nations or develop into an instrument where men and women of knowledge, understanding and goodwill will meet together, irrespective of political differences. We in Unesco have therefore to make up our minds whether the political limitations which restrict the activities of the United Nations must necessarily

be binding on us as well. Unfortunately, the United Nations have not succeeded in bringing nations closer together on the political plane, but must we not therefore make greater efforts to ensure that in the field of education, science and culture nations draw nearer one another ? To me it seems that whatever may be the differences in the political field, Unesco must not shut its doors to any country. In fact, it should go forward and knock at doors now closed to it. Unesco should not wait for any State or country to apply for membership but should itself extend a warm and standing invitation of all countries not yet its members. It is common human experience that friendship begets friendship and distrust, distrust. I have every reason to think that once Unesco offers its help and assistance to all countries, irrespective of political diffenreces, it may well provide a platform where dissident nations may work together and through common endeavour dispel suspicion, mistrust and discord.

There has been a new and universal declaration of human rights, but, Mr. President, I am sure you will agree that a mere declaration is not enough. I hope, I will not be misunderstood if I place before you and the representatives of different nations assembled here today as clearly and unequivocally as I can the feeling of the Indian people on this question. I do so the more readily as I am sure they are shared by all peoples in Eastern countries. They feel that inspite of the theoretical recognition of the quality of man, a session of people in the West is still not free from prejudices arising out of differences of colour and race. We, in the East, welcome the formulation of the principle of human equality but seek to know what Unesco is doing for the early attainment of these declared objectives. I am aware that the Director General has expressed the hope that, through fundamental education, these ideals will one day be attained, but people in the East, while they welcome it as a long-term programme, at the same time ask what Unesco is doing to realise this ideal in the immediate future.

Unesco, I feel, should give a lead to the world in understanding the great change which has come over Asia in the course of the half century or more. After age-long slumber, Asia is again awake and her awakening is symbolic of the awakening of all the East. For 200 years or more, the leadership in thought and achievement has rested with Europe, and the Europeans have

perhaps not unnaturally come to look upon themselves as the natural leaders of man. Today, Asia remembers that long before Europe achieved its greatness she had brought messages of hope and salvation to the whole of mankind. Today, she remembers her past traditions and is rightfully impatient of any suggestion of superiority or patronage from any quarter of the globe. Unless Unesco is sensitive to this feeling and understands fully the change which has come over the East, Unesco's work in Asia and Africa cannot be fully effective. Yet it seems to meet that even in Unesco there is an imperfect appreciation of this tremendous awakening of the East. I will give you only two examples. In the exhibition on human rights which was organised by Unesco, the emphasis was overwhelmingly on the achievements and concepts of the West, but can any one deny that the East had made valuable contributions to the conception of human dignity, equality and emancipation? Coming nearer home, in the set-up of Unesco itself; I am somewhat surprised to find that Asia and Africa, which together constitute perhaps two-thirds of the total population of the world, do not have even ten per cent of the posts among the higher executives. I am not one of those who think that appointments should go according to race, colour or nationality, but at the same time I would be failing in my duty if I did not point out that this gross under-representation of Asians and Africans in the more responsible offices of Unesco tends to create in the minds of Eeastern peoples a feeling that Unesco does not fully recognise their claims even though they base their claims on grounds of merit alone.

I should now like to refer briefly to a few important aspects of the programme presented to us. I have already said that we welcome the programme of technical assistance but I should like Unesco to remember that these programmes should be decided according to the wishes not of the donors but of the recipients. I should also like to point out that conditions differ from country to country and help which may be welcome and beneficial to one country may not fulfil the requirements of another. The forms of assistance must also vary, for some countries may require assistance in personnel while others may be more in need of equipment. The time has now come when we must survey once again the principles on which the programme of technical assistance is based and modify these to suit the requirements of

countries at different stages of development.

I also welcome and, in fact, wish to congratulate Unesco upon its move to revise and improve the teachings of history and geography in schools and colleges. For over thirty years I have held that there can be no peace for the world until we reform the methods of teaching history and geography in schools. At present, we teach young people in a way which emphasises their differences and conflicts. History is full of national glorification and at times national vainglory. Geography, instead of teaching the unity of the world, emphasises divisions. Not content with drawing boundaries which artificially divide the world, we paint each country in a different colour, so that from the very infancy the child learns to think of himself as different from his fellows in other parts of the globe. How can we hope to have better understanding between nations unless the younger generation is trained to think in terms of world unity and citizenship ? I am glad that Unesco is not only undertaking the preparation of a history of civilisation which will emphasise the unity of men but is also undertaking a revision of history and geography teaching by organising specialised studies in seminars.

There is another point on which I should like to touch before I conclude. I fully appreciate Unesco's desire to cover as wide a field as possible. I also understand and sympathise with member states who want special attention to be paid to their special problems. We have, however, to decide whether the best results can be achieved by taking up a large number of projects that cannot be fully carried out or by adopting a fundamental programme and carrying it out with all our energy and devotion. I am aware that the Director General is thinking along the same lines and has been trying to reduce the number of programme resolutions, but may I urge that he has not gone far enough and that we should help him to cut down programme resolutions even more and see that there is no waste of time, energy and manpower on schemes which are not fundamental ? I am sure you will all agree that there is room for drastic education in the number of papers, documents, committees and conferences which confront us every year. May I, for a moment, take you into my confidence, and say that the number of papers I have received for this conference alone are far more than I hope to study and I have half a suspicion that most delegates share my feelings ?

Mr. President, I have done, but before concluding I would stress once again that the time has come for Unesco to give a bold lead to the world for the creation of better understanding in the fields of education, science and culture without regard to political and economic difference, in the hope that once a unity of purpose is achieved in the intellectual field, unity will follow in the other fields as well. I am sure you will all share that hope and faith, for it is only through such unity that we can save mankind from disaster and ruin.

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UNESCO AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING*

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Unesco is one of the specialised agencies of UNO which was established to achieve international unity and peace. We must, however, confess that world unity on the political plane is still a distant goal. The world organisations which have been set up to achieve political unity, whether as the League of Nations or the United Nations Organisation, have not yet achieved anything that can rekindle the hopes of men. UNO, founded to solve all political problems in a spirit of equity by remaining free from entanglement with power blocks, is unfortunately itself becoming a victim of power politics. The conflicts between nations that formerly marked the field of diplomacy are now often displayed in the deliberations of UNO. How can we then hope that UNO will succeed in its aims unless it can disentangle itself from the trammels of political groupings and judge all questions from the point of view of international justice and peace ? While aware of the present shortcomings, India is nevertheless a staunch supporter of UNO, for world peace is so precious an objective that we cannot give up any instrument which offers even a remote hope of achieving it. And what instrument of world peace can there be other than UNO ? Like the Persian poet Urfi, I feel like saying :

*Speech of Welcome at the Second Session of the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco, New Delhi, March 24, 1951.

Zi Naqs-i-Tashna-Labee Dan Ba Aql-i-Khesh Manaz
Dilat Fareb Gar Az Jalwa-i-Surab Na-Khurd
'You need not take pride in your acumen if you look at the sands of Sahara and are not beguiled by the mirage of water;
For if you had been indeed thirsty, you would have seen the sand as water.'

If then the hopes of peace held out by UNO prove in the end to be illusory, the illusion is itself so dear to us that we would fain cherish it.

If, therefore, in this troubled world we can find any gleam of hope for unity and peace, it can be only through the activity of Unesco. Unesco rightly recognises that all conflicts originate in the mind of man, and hence it is in the minds of men that the bastions of peace must be built. The emphasis here is on the cultural unity of mankind to which different countries and different peoples have made their contribution. In Unesco one may therefore forget the clashes of Lake Success and live in an atmosphere where representatives who oppose one another in Uno can co-operate in creative effort. I may cite as an instance the political differences which have divided our country from South Africa. India has rightly sought the help of UNO to remove discrimination and racial inequality that prevail in South Africa, but in Unesco we find that the representatives of South Africa co-operate with the representatives of India in advancing the cause of education, science and culture. Education is basic to the creation of an atmosphere in which human beings can meet one another on a plane of friendship and equality, and we are particularly happy that the direction of Unesco is today in the hands of one who has identified himself with the furtherance of these ends.

Mr. Director General, you will perhaps agree with me that men and women of the present generation have been brought up in an atmosphere of such national exclusiveness that they cannot be expected to achieve world unity and world citizenship easily. They have been trained to think on lines which make it difficult to transcend the limitations of race, class or nationality. If therefore we are to achieve world unity, and all agree that without such unity the future of man is dark, all our efforts must be concentrated to educate the future generations for world citizenship.

If from their earliest days, the children of today are trained to think of one another in terms of unity and brotherhood, they will, when they grow up, develop an attitude of mind in which the present conflicts will become unnecessary and unreal.

I also hope, Mr. Director General, that you will agree with me that for achieving this end the entire method of teaching history and geography in schools must be changed. Till this has been done, there can be no hope of achieving a real unity of purpose among the peoples of the world and without such unity there can be no world citizenship. The way in which we teach history and geography today not only militates against this objective but is, in a way, not even founded on fact. This terrestrial globe which nature has created as one has been divided by us for our purposes into different compartments. Not content with this, we have painted the common world in different colours in order to ensure that these divisions are maintained and demarcated them as Asia and Europe, America and Africa. When we teach a child geography, we do not start by saying that he is an inhabitant of the earth, but on the contrary we start by instilling in his mind that he is from Delhi, and Delhi is in India, and India is in Asia, and Asia is in the Eastern Hemisphere. It is only after all these stages have been passed that we at last tell him that he is a denizen of the world. Is it surprising that a child brought up in this way thinks of himself as belonging to the particular spot where he has been born, be it Delhi or Paris, Peking or New York ? At most, he can transcend his provincial and national borders and feel himself an Asian or a European, an African or an American, but the idea of his membership of the human species remains a mere abstraction.

I am sure, Mr. Director General, you will agree that this method of teaching geography must be changed. We must have new maps for children in the elementary stages in which the world will be painted in one colour; we must teach the child that he is a denizen of the world first and foremost, and then go on to tell him that just as a town is divided into different wards for purposes of convenience, but nevertheless the town remains one, so the world is divided into segments like Asia and America; Africa and Europe, but such divisions do not disrupt the unity of the world. Just as the ward is again divided into smaller

sections and streets, the continents are divided into smaller units and we call them countries, but these countries remain integral parts of the same world. I have no doubt that geography taught in this way will, from their very childhood, establish in the minds of children a sense of belonging to One World.

Like mistaught geography, history mistaught has also become an instrument for the division of mankind. In our current history books, we are told that men belong to different races and nations. The story of these nations emphasises their internecine conflicts so that the relation between men from different groups is represented as one of hatred and discord. It is inevitable that history so taught must lead to a constriction of the mind, a narrowing of the vision in which the child's identity with his group depends upon its sharp demarcation from all other groups. I sometimes think that it was better when men and women believed implicitly in the story of the Bible, and thought that whatever be the differences between nations and races, they were all the children of Adam and Eve. This concept of common percentage served as a bond of unity in the midst of our many differences and conflicts. In the 19th century, as our knowledge increased, we started questioning these religious legends. Instead of derivation from common parents, we started to divide mankind into Caucasians and Mongolians, into Aryans and Semetics, and into further sub-divisions within each larger division. I do not know if the story of Adam and Eve is literally true or a Hebrew version of the Chaldeanmyth, but I have no doubt that it is in essence true : it is a recognition of the fundamental truth that the human race is one in orgin and hence all men are akin to one another. Such recognition is not to my mind incompatible with belief in the theory of evolution. One can accept that theory and still hold that all men belong to the same species and differences among them developed on account of difference in environment and other factors. Just as the teaching of geography must be recast to bring out the unity of the world, we must recast the teaching of history to bring out the unity of man.

I would like to refer to the so-called opposition between East and West, or between different races and cultures. Most accounts of such conflicts seem in any case to be based on a misunderstanding of facts. We are told that centuries before the Christian era, the Persian attack on Greece was an attack of the East on the

West, and led to a counter-attack by the West led by Alexander. Are these however conflicts between East and West, or campaigns of conquest by individuals who wanted to bring the whole of the known world under their sway ? It seems to me that we have thus created needlessly a myth of conflict between East and West extending over millenniums. It seems obvious to me that till we recast the teaching of history and geography, we cannot hope to change the attitude of man. I know that this is no easy task, for even with such reform of the teaching of history and geography, many obstacles will remain. Perhaps the greatest of these obstacles is the cult of narrow nationalism. It is strange that nationalism which developed as a defence against the autocracy of kings has itself become aggressive today. A force for liberation and liberalism in the 19th century, it has today become an instrument for holding back the progress of man. So intense and pervasive has become its influence that however clearly we recognise the need of world unity and however keenly we desire it, we cannot yet transcend the limitations of nationalism. And yet unless we can go beyond nationalism, the future of man is dark.

Mr. Director General, I am glad to hear that Unesco has already taken steps for reform in the methods of teaching history and geography. I was glad to learn that seminars have been held for the purpose and what is more important, Unesco is undertaking to produce a history of mankind which will emphasise growth the of world unity. I have every hope that this aspiration of Unesco will be translated into reality during your regime, and I can assure you that India, which is one of the founder members of Unesco, will extend all possible help and co-operation towards the furtherance of that end.

I have now great pleasure in requesting the Prime Minister to inaugurate this session of the Indian National Commission.

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UNESCO AND THE EAST

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

I am very happy to welcome all of you to this conference of the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco. My pleasure is the greater because fraternal delegates from many sister nations of Asia and Africa have accepted our invitation to attend the conference and share in its deliberations. Since the aims of Unesco can be realised only through mutual understanding and co-operation, their participation is particularly valuable. It will help them to understand the problems with which we are grappling and give us a clearer idea of the programmes we must recommend to Unesco.

It also gives me great pleasure that on the occasion of this conference, we have, among us, the Director General of Unesco and the Chairman and a Member of the Executive Board. Their participation will enable them to appreciate the problems and aspirations of a region where more than half of mankind lives. It will also give the new Director General a deeper insight into the tasks which await the organisation in this part of the world.

The proposal to set up National Commissions in member-States is to be commended for many reasons. This has resulted in the establishment of a permanent agency for the working out of Unesco's ideas at many levels. While the membership of Unesco

*Presidential address at the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco, New Delhi, January 9, 1954.

is confined only to States, it is obvious that its work must be carried out among the people. The National Commission with its close association with various non-official agencies provides a platform to disseminate Unesco's programmes in many ways. One may, in fact, say that Unesco's work is delegated to these National Commissions. To my mind, the main purpose of setting up the National Commissions was, on the one hand, to make Unesco conscious of the people's needs, and, on the other, to make the people conscious of Unesco's functions and purposes. The National Commissions are therefore the proper agencies to spread Unesco's ideas and objectives among the people. One may, in fact, go so far as to say that Unesco is active only if the National Commissions are active. Similarly, the National Commissions can function properly only if Unesco is active.

If we keep this test before us, we have to admit that the National Commissions have not always been as effective as we would wish them to be. I am not referring to the United States or some of the European countries, for I have no direct knowledge of the activities of the National Commissions in these areas. So far as the Eastern countries are concerned, by and large, they have not yet fulfilled what we expected of them. The Commissions have been set up, offices opened and staff employed, but they have not yet made their influence felt in their own countries; nor have they reflected adequately their points of view in framing Unesco's general programme. This is the feeling I have in respect of the Indian National Commission; though I am aware that our foreign friends feel that our Commission is very active. I have a feeling that many of our fraternal delegates will share this view in respect of their own National Commissions.

It is therefore necessary for us to devise methods by which National Commissions may be activised. Apart from the desire to have representatives of neighbouring countries among us, this is one of the main reasons why we have invited fraternal delegates from sister nations. It is our purpose and hope that their association may create an opportunity where representatives of the Asian and African National Commissions may meet and consider why more progress was not achieved. Such discussions will also help all of us to define more sharply the main objectives of Unesco and advise it on the programmes which are necessary to fulfil these objectives in the context of the East.

I wish, in this connection, to place before the Conference some important issues which, to my mind, have prevented a more effective implementation of Unesco's ideals and programmes. My purpose is to express the feelings of my country and other countries in the East fully and frankly. There is no suggestion of complaint in what I am going to say. In the brotherhood of Unesco, there must not be any occasion for mutual recrimination. It is, however, necessary that we understand one another clearly and fully, for without such understanding we cannot co-operate in the achievement of our common goal.

The first thing I want to say is that there is a feeling throughout the East that the U.N. and its specialised agencies have not yet given to the East, the attention which it can rightfully claim. The Eastern nations feel that while in theory they are recognised as equal partners in the United Nations, the practice does not always conform to the theory. They feel that the central offices of the U.N. and allied agencies do not fully understand their problems and needs. So long as there is this feeling, it will be difficult to create whole-hearted enthusiasm for the U.N. and Unesco in these regions.

One of the reasons for such a feeling in the East is its recollection of the attitude which developed in the West in the 18th century. Two things happened simultaneously in that period. On the one hand, the Eastern countries reached the lowest depths of depression and, on the other, a new impulse to progress and advancement swept throughout Europe and America. The inevitable result of these developments was that the Western nations divided the world into two categories. There was, on one side, the free and superior world of the Western peoples and, on the other, the world of inferior and subject nations in Asia and Africa. Whenever the Western nations talked of human rights, they were thinking only of individuals and nations in the West. For them, such a concept had hardly any reference to Asia or Africa. In the latter half of the 18th century, first the U.S.A., and later France, promulgated the doctrine of the rights of man, but in the United States this doctrine did not apply to the negroes nor in France to the people under colonial rule. It is true that a humanitarian like Jefferson was conscious of the implications of these declarations. He referred explicitly to the plight of the slaves but the climate of opinion was such that even a Jefferson

could not carry his people in this respect. The 19th century and especially its latter half saw the spread of European colonialism in Asia and Africa and an increasing awareness of human rights and dignity. This period also saw a beginning of the change in the world situation. The Eastern countries shook off their age-long torper and began to share in a new awakening. A profound revolution has since taken place in their minds, and they are claiming equality with the Western people. With the progress of the twentieth century, there has been a further change of far-reaching import. A situation has developed where, with one or two unfortunate exceptions, the Western nations have recognised that the days of colonialism and domination are over. Today, the Eastern peoples are not prepared to co-operate except on one term, viz., on the basis of complete equality with the West. Superiority and inferiority between nations have no place in the modern world.

The recognition of equality is the basis of the United Nations. The U.N. has brought all nations on the same platform without regard to East or West. Unesco, which is one of its specialised agencies, is also working in the same spirit. I hope, I shall not be misunderstood if I say that there is, nevertheless, still a feeling among the peoples of Asia and Africa that the old ideas of superiority have not yet been completely eradicated from the Western minds. So long as there is such a feeling in Asia or Africa, Unesco's objectives cannot be fully realised. The first step should therefore be for the U.N. and Unesco to recognise the existence of such feelings in the Eastern minds and to adopt an attitude and procedure which will convince the Asian and African people that a true spirit of brotherhood, equality and co-operation has dawned on the world.

The U.N. and Unesco were set up after World War II. It was necessary in the conditions then prevailing that immediate steps should be taken for the rehabilitation of Europe. Though the war damages were not confined only to Europe, the higher priority placed on Europe was justified and could be understood. No Asian or African could object with reason to the programmes then adopted for the rehabilitation of war-devastated Europe. The position is, however, different today. European reconstruction has been largely achieved, while Asia and Africa are still waiting for effective programmes of rehabilitation and development. Asia

and Africa are therefore waiting to see if Unesco will place today the same priority on work in these areas as it did on work in Europe immediately after the war.

I have already said that I am happy that the new Director General has taken this early opportunity of visiting Asia. I would like to impress upon him that there is a feeling in Asia and Africa that their needs are not considered as carefully as they have a right to expect. Even today in most of the programmes of the U.N. and Unesco, a greater importance seems to attach to the problems of Europe and South America. Unesco cannot succeed in its object so long as all parts of the world do not feel equally treated by it. We have also to consider what parts of the world are in greater need of Unesco's aid. There can be no doubt that in respect of education, culture, scientific progress and economic prosperity, Asia and Africa are far behind Europe and America. Millions are without access to literacy and education. Science has opened out prospects of immense advancement, but not for them. Their standard of life is so low that people of the Western world can hardly imagine it. In such a situation, if Asia and Africa find that more stress is laid not on their problems but on those of others, it is not surprising that there should be lack of enthusiasm for the U.N. and Unesco in these regions.

Unesco aims at the propagation of education, science and culture. If we look at the programmes of Unesco in the last six years, it becomes clear how much still has to be achieved. Some years ago Unesco accepted a most important programme in the field of fundamental education. The Asian and African countries were hopeful that this would help to spread literacy and raise the standard of life in the less developed regions of the world. It is a matter for regret that after the establishment of only two centres, one in South America and the other in Egypt, the programme was abandoned. I feel that one of the first priorities in Unesco's programme should be the establishment of more fundamental education centres in Asia and Africa. It is, however, necessary to emphasise that such centres must not be too elaborate and expensive. They must be in conformity with the requirements and resources of these regions, for only then can they serve the purpose in view.

I have referred to one reason why the Asian and African nations feel that Unesco has paid less attention to their needs,

Another reason for this feeling is to be found in Unesco's attitude towards so-called international organisations. The multiplication of such organisations seems, at times, to be without sufficient justification, for they do not always seem to be concerned with the basic problems of Unesco and may be regarded more as frills on the margin. Nor do they seem to be international in the true sense. Very often their activities are confined to Europe and sometimes to only one or two countries of that continent. We, however, find that they are not only given accommodation in Unesco House but Unesco's meagre resources are dissipated in giving subsidies to them. We have to recognise that the days when Europe was equated with the world are gone for ever. Today, no organisation can be regarded as truly international unless it functions in both the East and the West. India has already suggested that no organisation should be recognised by Unesco as international unless it operates in at least three continents and has at least five member-States in each continent. This view has not yet been accepted, and the result is that a number of organisations, which call themselves international but have no right to do so, eat up a substantial portion of Unesco's funds. In view of the shortage of funds and the many claims on it, Unesco must in fact make a selection out of organisations which can satisfy the conditions mentioned above. We must therefore both decide an order of priority and lay down criteria to determine the international character of organisations before Unesco gives them any aid.

Unesco should also consider whether there is room for economy in the administration budget of the Headquarters. I recognise that the execution of programmes cannot be carried out without adequate staff. The staff is, however, only a means to an end and cannot itself be the end. Unesco would therefore defeat its own purposes if administration ate up so much of its resources as not to leave enough for the execution of its programmes.

I understand that Unesco's budget for this year is approximately nine million dollars. Of this amount, more than two-thirds, viz., 6.3 million dollars is shown as provision for administration while only 2 million dollars are for the execution of programmes and 4,88,650 dollars for subventions to international organisations. I am aware that the charges for administration include some items connected with programmes, but even then the allocation of two-thirds of the fund of administration

appears to be too glaring to escape public criticism. I am sure the new Director General is aware of this disproportion and will take early steps to ensure that a greater proportion of Unesco's limited resources are diverted from the provision of means to the achievement of ends.

Closely connected with this is the problem of concentration of programmes. It is generally agreed that today Unesco's programme is spread over a vast field and contains items, at least some of which cannot be regarded as basic. I, of course, concede that an international organisation with many member-States must seek within its means to satisfy all their demands. I, nevertheless, feel that the time has come to concentrate on three or four basic programmes and devote all our funds and energy to their execution. It is surely better to accomplish one or two important projects than to attempt a dozen programmes of varying importance and leave all of them half complete. I hope that this conference will pay attention to this issue and frame a programme for the consideration of Unesco by which an order of priorities among programmes may be settled.

What I have said so far is largely negative. We should now consider what positive measures can be adopted to make the work of Unesco more effective throughout the world. I have said that Unesco should pay more attention to the feelings and needs of Asia and Africa. I will now add that Unesco must have greater access to such feelings and needs. One suggestion which occurs to me is the decentralisation of the work of Unesco and the establishment of regional centres in Asia and Africa. Just as W.H.O. has set up regional organisations which both reflect and respond to local feelings and needs, Unesco should also set up regional offices. These should be manned mainly by the people of the region, for only they can have adequate knowledge and sympathy with its problems and be able to interpret Unesco to them.

The execution of these programmes depends ultimately on the interests and the will of the member-States. Sometimes it is said that the limiting factor of Unesco programmes is funds. I do not fully agree. The funds themselves depend upon the interest and will of the member-States. If the member-States give greater priority to education and the programmes of peace, they can place much larger funds at Unesco's disposal.

In this context, I wish to draw your attention to an issue of

paramount importance in the modern world. This is the question of the use of atomic power for the purposes of peace. One of the most hopeful developments in recent times has been the statement of President Eisenhower before the General Assembly of the United Nations. If the line of thought suggested by him is developed and all atomic energy placed at the disposal of the United Nations, the nightmare in which the modern world lives can come to an end. The peaceful use of atomic power would relieve the budgets of nations from the crushing burden of armaments. You are all aware that if one per cent of what is being spent on armaments today is placed at the disposal of Unesco, startling developments will take place all over the world. Peaceful use of atomic power would not only release existing funds for purposes of education, science and culture but also enormously enhance such resources. We have also to consider which organ of the U.N. is best suited for the peaceful exploitation of atomic power. To my mind, this can be none other than Unesco. By its very constitution it is pledged to the application of scientific research for human advancement. In part fulfilment of this purpose, it has already decided to set up a European centre for nuclear research. Its concern with education, science and culture also makes it comparatively immune from political influence. For all these considerations, Unesco would be the agency most suited to carry out researches for the peaceful use of atomic energy.

I would also like to refer to what the Eastern countries can give to the West. The East needs from the West science and technique but it need not be only a receiver. It can also offer the West help in one very important respect. This is by dissemination of the abiding values of Eastern culture in the West. In the West culture has often meant painting, music, literature and science. In the East it means something more. No Eastern concept of culture is complete unless it includes the values of the spirit. It is generally recognised that the West is in great need of these values. I am aware that Unesco has a programme of translation of the Eastern classics, but what I feel is that if this is done on a sufficiently wide scale, it may provide the West with just those values it lacks and needs. Unesco may thus well serve as the agency through which science and technique are brought to the East, while the values of the spirit are made available to the West.

Before I conclude I would like to mention one other issue which India has raised on several occasions and to which I myself referred when I addressed the General Conference of Unesco in 1951. This is the issue of throwing open the doors of Unesco to all countries without regard to their economic or political belief or status. Economic or political differences may divide the world into rival camps, but there is no reason why the cultural unity of mankind should not triumph over such divisions. Human culture in its real sense is one and indivisible and, as the agency for education, science and culture, Unesco must be global in its approach and compass. I feel that Unesco cannot really fulfil its function until nations which now stand outside its portals join its brotherhood. The U.S.S.R. and the Chinese People's Republic are not members of Unesco and yet a large section of the world's people live in their territories. How can Unesco's role be fulfilled till these people can also share in its message of education, science and culture ? It does not matter whether these countries have applied for membership to Unesco or not. It is Unesco's duty to extend to them an invitation to join its brotherhood. If they refuse, the responsibility will be theirs.

I am sorry that an accident keeps me confined to my bed and prevents me from participating in your deliberations. My thoughts are, however, with you. I have therefore placed before you in writing what I would have liked to say to you in person. I hope you will consider what I have said and formulate proposals that will advance the cause of Unesco in this region of the world.

I am happy that in spite of the many calls upon his time, the Prime Minister has been able to participate in our conference. I now request him to inaugurate this conference and share with us his thoughts for the peace, progress and welfare of man.

PART II

ISBN

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : AN UNUSUAL POLITICIAN

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

It is always difficult to write about a person one has come to know well. It is still more difficult when that person is a political colleague with whom one has shared the burdens and responsibilities of public work. And so I do not find it easy to write anything about Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

It was about twenty-two years ago when I first met the Maulana. Of course I had heard about him previously, of his great learning, of his integrity in the national cause, and of his internment during the last World War. So I was eager to see him. He was fairly young in years. And yet he had somehow the impress of maturity about him. Inevitably he took his place among the elders of the Congress, though he was much younger in years. I had occasion to see him and watch him from some distance, for at that time I was not intimately associated with the inner counsels of the Congress. In later years, I saw a great deal of him at work in the Working Committee of the Congress, and especially during the last dozen years I have been closely associated with him. Excepts for our long periods in prison and except for my absence from India, I have been in continuous touch with him in our day-to-day work in the Congress, as well as in the taking of weighty decisions. In Congress history, and therefore in recent Indian history, few people perhaps know what a great part he has played in shaping decisions. Whether as a President or as a

member of the Working Committee, his opinion has carried very great weight with all the other members. This was so because more and more we came to recognise the ripe wisdom which by behind those opinions.

The Maulana is an unusual type of politician. He lacks the usual temperament of a successful politician who becomes tough and insensitive and capable of giving and receiving hard blows. He is the very opposite of this. He is exceedingly sensitive and retiring. A fine and moving orator, he yet dislikes the rough and tumble of the crowd and it is no easy matter to get him to address public meetings. He is essentially the scholar whom circumstances have forced into a life of action.

He reminds me often of the French Encyclopaedists who preceded the great French revolution. His knowledge of past history is vast and all this is arranged in a well-ordered way in his mind. One is continually astonished at odd bits of knowledge that come out of him almost unawares. His mind is logical and precise and one would think that it had been trained in the old schools of formal logic and philosophy. His general outlook is rational. And yet with all this three is a human background which softens the weight of learning and shows itself in a rich, though sometimes dry, humour.

Probably if he had not been so retiring by nature he would have played an even greater part in the public life of our country, because he has it in him to move millions by his voice and his pen. We have heard that voice much to seldom in public, and unfortunately for many years his pen has not functioned as of old.

I have always regretted this neglect of the pen on his part. For the language he writes is full of winged words. Indeed it was through the pen that he became known, while he was yet in his teens, not only in India but in the Arabic countries of western Asia and Egypt. Even now a traveller in those Arabic-speaking lands is asked about Abul Kalam Azad. If he had carried on his crusade of the pen, what tremendous service he could have rendered to the cause of clear thinking and, therefore, right action, amongst our people.

Circumstances, however, forced him to shoulder other burdens and responsibilities. History will tell of how he did so. But we, who have had the privilege of close comradeship with him, need not await the verdict of history. He has been a tower strength

to us and to the country and whether one agreed with him or not, we always knew that his opinion mattered and could never be lightly brushed aside. For behind that opinion lay a keen and well-trained mind, knowledge of the past and of the present, and a ripe wisdom which is given to few.

The younger generation can learn much from this great Indian. He has found no difficulty in being a most learned of Muslim divines and at the same time an exponent and an emblem of India's unity. Lesser men have sometimes found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. But he has been big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity, but also to realise that only in this unity can there be hope for India as a whole and for those great and varied currents of national life which course through her veins.

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MAULANA AZAD : A PEN-PORTRAIT

MAHADEV DESAI

Of a tall, erect and stately figure and with eyes that flash intelligence and inspite awe, the Maulana reminds one of those great figures like Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari, who represented in their lives the best in Islamic culture. There is a polish and refinement of manner that compels respect wherever he goes, but there is also a ıeserve which does not make it easy for one to class him with some of those leaders who are accessible to everyone, who will pestered by all and sundry, and who, therefore, whether they want it or not, make themselves popular everywhere. His deep learning and insatiable appetite for knowledge combined with his contemplative temperament make it impossible for him to go and mix with the masses, listen to their endless tales of woe and carry comfort to them. Not that there is any lack of feeling in him for the down-trodden of the land. As I heard him speak the other day on the implication of Khadi, I felt as though I should like him to go on for hours on that absorbing theme, as "Swaraj," he said, "has no meaning until it annihilates the yawning gulf between the 'haves' and the have-nots,' and I cannot think of anything better than Khadi and the universal use of it to make us feel somewhat at one with the millions of our down-trodden brethren. Do we want to come down from the high pedestal that we have occupied for ages ? Do we want our less fortunate brethren to work side by side with us and to feel the pride and pleasure of working for freedom and to feel the glow of

freedom as we should feel ? Do you want them to awake and arise with you ? There is no other alternative before us but the universalization of Khadi." And yet I have an impression that his make-up would not allow him to sit down in a village playing his wheel. He knows this very well himself, and I think there are few leaders who are more conscious of their limitations than is the Maulana. He has an intellectual grasp superior to many in the Congress camp, and he can often explain and expound a policy with a brilliance and clarity that is unsurpassed.

There is no greater diplomat among the Congress ranks than the Maulana, and once he sees and accepts a position there is no one who has his intellectual resourcefulness to explain it from all possible points of view, in all possible aspects. That is what makes Gandhiji turn to him on many a crucial occasion. I once asked the Maulana as to what was the source of his attachment to Gandhiji. He said, "Apart from the great intellect, it was his stainless truth that attracted me towards him. But until 1926 I was more or less critical. Then I happened to read an article of his in *Young India*, in which he laid bare his soul in criticizing a trivial lapse by Mrs. Gandhi. She had forgotten to make over to the manager of the Ashram a gift that someone had given her. 'There', I said to himself, 'is a man whose truth not even his enemies can doubt', and I was astonished at the length to which his truth would carry him."

The Maulana has occupied a unique position in the Congress affairs. He has occupied that position all these years, even when he was not the Congress President, and whether he holds that office or not he will continue to enjoy that position during all the active years that are vouchsafed to him by God.

And yet he fights shy of positions of power. He might have been the leader of the party in any of the legislatures both during the "preautonomy" days and after. But the scrupulously steered clear of that course. He was always in the counsels of Deshabandhu Das and Pandit Motilalji, they would not take a step on important occasions without his advice. But he preferred to remain in the position of an adviser and never thought of being in the actual fray.

He is at his best when left alone with his books and intellectual pursuits. The late Lokmanya Tilak used to say with regard to himself that what he might well have given to the goddess of

the cause of liberation of Greece and met his death in the attempt, the part he played in revolutionary politics everywhere and his impassioned plea through all his utterances for freedom of life and thought.

The world's great thinkers are all there in his library—Goethe, Spinoza, Rousseau, Marx, Havelock Ellis—there are Upanishadas and the Vedas, there are all the volumes of the People of all Nations, Historians, History, International Library of Famous Literature, and so on. He has with his voracious appetite read all the Waverly novels and everything of Dumas and Hugo, especially the novels about the French Revolution. Tolstoy and Ruskin he has read more than once, and books of history and philosophy are his constant companions. Once on the railway train I found him with a volume on Nyaya Vaisheshika Philosophy, and he has time even in this busy age to enjoy a volume on Madame Jeanne Pompadour. The latest volume on the Prophet and Omar the Great are there on a rack of books opposite his writing-table, but so also are books of Flaubert and among them Madame Bovary ! I need not mention numerous cupboards full of Arabic and Persian and Turkish books whose names even are unknown to us.

He keeps himself in constant touch with the outside world by a voluminous correspondence. Among his correspondents have been the late Zaghlul Pasha and Fathi Bey, who was his great friend. He was in close touch with the late Mustafa Kamal Pasha and other leading men of Turkey. Almost all the leaders of the old Young Turks Party which brought about Revolution of 1908 through its "Union and Progress" programme were the personal friends of the Maulana. This party remained in power till the beginning of the last European War. Ahmad Reda, Speaker of Turkish Parliament, Dr. Salahud Din, Enver Pasha and Djaved Bey had correspondence with him. The famous Radical of Iran Taqui Zadeh was amongst the friends of the Maulana.

His absorption in the studies has given him a kind of predilection for loneliness, and though he is most affable and ever deferential he has very few friends. Though a finished conversationalist, he inclines most towards reticence. Due to his reserved nature, little is known of his life to most of us beyond the fact that he loves a cup of tea and that he is a chain-smoker.

His life is absolutely simple and in his office room and drawing-room you do not find anything but books. There are no photographs even. Regarding his cigarettes, I asked him what happened to him when he went to jail. He said, "I am glad you have asked this question. I had ten cigarettes in my cigarette-case when I was taken to Alipur Jail in 1921. I smoked two and handed over the balance to the jail authorities. Deshabandhu Das twitted me saying I should need them in jail. I said, 'Not until I am released.' And I tell you within a short time I did not even miss them." In this respect he resembled the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, who once told me : "I love the good things of life, but I am not wedded to them. I can give them up at a moment's notice." And he differs from men like Mr. de Valera, or say Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Mr. Thomas once told Mr. de Valera that he was surprised that he "had no petty vices;" in that he did not even smoke. "No, Mr. Thomas," said Mr. de Valera, "you English are responsible for that. You may remember that on one occasion—memorable to me—I was arrested and taken to your Lincoln jail. Just before we arrived at the prison I said to the policeman in charge of me that I would like a cigarette. He had no objection, so I lit one. Then looking at the cigarette I mused : "I suppose the British intend to hang me, and this will be my last cigarette. If, however, I should get out of this jail I will never have another cigarette, so that I can retain the memory of this one.' As you know I did get out, and have never smoked tobacco since." An exactly similar thing happened to Sardar Vallabhbhai in 1930, when he was arrested for the first time. He was not going to be hanged, his term of imprisonment then was ludicrously brief—only three months—but he refused to accept a cigarette from the police official escorting him and has not since touched tobacco. The Maulana lived without a cigarette for over fifteen months, but had one immediately on release and did not decline to smoke in the Meerut prison where he was allowed the liberty.

His habits are regular, he is a very early riser, has no other "petty vices," save smoking, and I do not think he ever visits places of entertainment. He shuns shows and processions and rarely accepts invitations to late dinners and the like. A finished and polished speaker, he has none of the strength or weakness of a demagogue. His contribution to debate is always most

valuable, and he is at his best in the committee meetings. He can sweep audiences off their feet by the direct, simple, incisive eloquence of his speech, but he is not essentially a man of the people.

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MAULANA AZAD : A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

M. Asaf Ali

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is a descendant of Sheikh Jamaluddin, a profound scholar and an erudite doctor of divinity, who like many another savant of the Near East was attracted to India by the intellectual atmosphere of Akbar's court. His impeccable integrity was recognised by the great Emperor himself and he was held in very high esteem by Mirza Aziz Kokaltash, Akbar's foster-brother, and many other nobles at the Moghal court. He was one of the few who declined to sign the manifesto drawn up by the worldly wise divines of Akbar's time endorsing Akbar's claim to be the founder of Din-i-Ilahi or the new divine religion. Both from the grandmother and the grandfather's side the Maulana can trace his ancestry to well-known doctors of divinity and men of widely respected saintliness. His mother came of a leading family of Medina. Among his ancestors there were leading theologians who from time to time had to quite the country to seek refuge in Arabia to preserve the integrity of their views against the imperial will. His father too had to leave India after the revolution of 1857 and lived in Arabia for several years. At the invitation of Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan he went over to Constantinople where he lived for three years. In 1872 he conceived the idea of repairing *Nahr-i-Zubaida of Mecca*, one of the watercourses named after the famous queen Zubaida. More than 11 lakhs of rupees were collected through his efforts for this purpose. Finally in 1907 he came to Calcutta at the invitation of

his numerous devotees and settled there. Several of his works were printed in Egypt and are still looked upon as a worthy contribution to theological discussion.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad originally named Ahmed was born in Mecca in September, 1888. He was also called Firoz Bakht by his father, and spent his childhood in Mecca and Medina where his father's house was a great centre of learning. He received his early education under his father's guidance and has also been to the world-famous university of Al-Azhar in Cairo. By the age of 14 he had covered the entire ground included in the Oriental Curriculum of the day and was actually put in charge of classes in various subjects. He was generally regarded as a prodigy even at that age. His quick intelligence and his thirst for knowledge unhampered by inherited or environmental prejudices marked him out as a man pre-eminently fitted to fill any role which required courage and intellectual integrity of a high order. He was born in a family which was well known for its strict orthodoxy. But his natural boldness prompted him to re-examine every aspect of life afresh. The first stirrings of his mind have been recorded by him in a brief autobiographical note in the *Tazkira*, which he wrote during his internment at the age of 30. He found it impossible, he records, to accept anything without examining it afresh in the light of his own reason. For a time he even lingered in the realm of scepticism. But deeper probings revealed to him the solid core of Islamic teachings.

He brought out his first production at the age of 15. This was a monthly literary magazine called the *Lisanul Sidq*, which was greatly appreciated by the poet Hali. In 1904 Hali met Abul Kalam and finding him only a youth of 16 refused to believe that he was the editor. His incredulity over, he remained one of the warmest admirers of Abul Kalam for the rest of his life. When he was only 14 the Maulana entered into correspondence with Maulana Shibli and also contributed some articles to the *Makhzan* of Lahore. In 1904 he had occasion to meet Maulana Shibli in Bombay and Shibli spoke very highly of Abul Kalam's contribution, but under the impression that he was speaking to Abul Kalam's son ! Nawab Mohsinul Mulk always used to address Abul Kalam as "young in years but old in learning."

His conscious political life, though a little older, can be definitely traced back to 1912 when he began to give expression to

his mature thoughts in his journal *Alhilal*, which was the first of its kind in India and which at the time compared favourably with the standard journals of the West in respect of form and substance. Not only in thought but in expression he struck an original line of advance and founded a style in Urdu writing which has influenced numerous writers during the last 30 years. He was convinced that a revolution in Muslim thought was urgently called for and *Alhilal* was the medium through which he wanted to achieve his end. It was about this time that he began to publish along with political essays, a series of discourses on religious subjects, which fired educated minds dissatisfied with stagnant dogmatism with a new enthusiasm. He laid the foundation of a new school of rational criticism and discussion in theological controversy. Like the poet Iqbal he set most of the educated Musalmans of India thinking about the fundamental and vital problems of life.

The popularity which *Alhilal* achieved among the Indian Musalmans within two or three months of its appearance was phenomenal. It became an organ of advanced political thought and rational religious instruction no less than a model of dignified and persuasive literature. Up to this day its old copies are treasured by their possessors.

Hitherto both in religion and in politics the educated Musalmans of the day used to look upon the Aligarh school of thought as the final source of guidance. As every one, familiar with Muslim political thought in India, is aware, after having attended the Congress once, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan concentrated of Muslim education and drew the Muslims away from politics. In 1906 under official guidance, the Muslim League came to be founded as the organ of the Muslim political opinion. The aim of the League as declared then was to foster loyalty to the British Crown and British officials used to look upon the League as an instrument of their political policy. Even the famous *Comrade* which the late Maulana Mohammad Ali had founded in Calcutta in 1911, in its earlier phases drew its inspiration from the Aligarh school of thought. Abul Kalam Azad initiated a vigorous campaign against this school of thought in his journal and invited the Muslims to co-operate with the Congress in liberating the country from foreign domination. The politicians of the old school of thought were startled. Even Maulana Mohammad Ali in the

beginning showed a marked tendency to counteract the effect which the *Alhilal* was producing among the Indian Musalmans. The *Alhilal* gradually but steadily made its way into the hearts of progressive Musalmans and the stagnant waters of orthodoxy and indifference were stirred to their very depth.

From the day of its appearance in 1912 to the day it ceased publication in 1915 under the Defence of India Act the *Alhilal* exercised a powerful influence among the Indian Musalmans, and up to this day neither in form nor substance has it been surpassed, though many efforts have been made by several aspirants to reproduce its excellence. At first the Government snuffed it out of existence in 1915. Abul Kalam's irrepressible genius, however, blossomed out in the *Albalagh* which he brought out after the cessation of the *Alhilal*. It had scarcely been in existence for a few months when, in April 1916, the Government of Bengal externed him from that province. The Punjab, U.P., Bombay and other Governments had already declared him an unwelcome guest, and he was constrained to remove himself to Ranchi where he was interned 5 months after his arrival there. He was released in 1920. When he emerged from his internment (he was the last of those who had been interned during the Great War to be released), he was hailed by the united body of Muslim theologians of India as a clear thinker who had earned the right to be respected.

The revolution which Abul Kalam's writings and speeches had brought about in the outlook of the Indian Mussalmans began to reveal itself in 1913 even in the Muslim League of the day. Sir Syed Wazir Hassan (then Mr. Syed Wazir Hassan) met the Maulana in 1913 as the Secretary of the League, and suggested that the League should change its previous aim of blind submission to autocracy to "a suitable form of self-government." The Congress had not gone much farther either, although Dadabhai Naoroji had introduced the word "Swaraj" into Congress politics. Maulana Abul Kalam was of the opinion that this was not enough. However, even this was rather a big leap for the League.

He met Mahatma Gandhi in 1921, since when he has continued to be one of the staunchest supporters of the non-violent school of thought. He had held the high office of the President of the Muslim League and the old All-India Khilafat Committee and in 1923 he definitely aligned himself with the old Swaraj Party, and was one of the late C.R. Das and Pandit Moti Lal Nehru's

effective collaborators. Towards the last quarter of 1923, the controversy between the Swarajists and the No-changes, which had arisen out of the majority and minority report of the C.D.O. Committee, reached its climax and it was decided to settle the controversy at a special session of the Congress. Muslim Congressmen, like the Hindus, were divided with the late Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with several others in the Swarajists, and Maulana Mohammad Ali and Dr. Ansari in the Nochangers' camp. Maulana Azad was elected the President of the historic Special Session, held at Delhi, when the Congress lifted the ban from the parliamentary programme and permitted the Swarajists to enter the legislatures to oppose the Governments of the day. Since then Maulana has firmly adhered to the political school of thought which has advocated the combination of the parliamentary and the non-parliamentary programmes of the Congress. In 1924 he decided to divide his residence between Delhi and Calcutta, to resume his literary activities and to conclude and publish his translation and commentary of the Quran, at a printing-house established for the purpose in Delhi, but the stress of multifarious activities compelled him to return to and stay in Calcutta. His translation of the Quran and his commentary is one of his most popular works. His association with the Working Committee of the A.I.C.C. is nearly as old as the Committee itself but his connection with the League as also of many other nationalist Muslims ceased when its affairs passed into the hands of a group who began to use it as an instrument for reactionary purposes. His active connection with the Khilafat Committee also abated when circumstances led to a contraction of its activities. He has, however, been constantly associated with the Jamiatul-Ulema-i-Hind; and he misses no opportunity of renewing his contacts with this influential body of recognised theologians and their associates. This is a body of doctors of Muslim theology who count their religious followers among the masses by the million, despite the League's loud denunciation of these divines for holding advanced political views, although they have suffered in numerous ways for their convictions. During the climax of the Khilafat movement the Jamiat laid down the law for the Indian Muslims. It is strange to find that nearly all the moderates and reactionaries, who were eclipsed in those days by the Ulema, have mustered strong under the banner of the League in

the name of Islam, and in support of the slogan "Musalmans in Danger." However, Maulana Abul Kalam has never wavered in his allegiance to the true spirit of Islam, which is supra-national and is opposed to the narrowness which is bred by racial or tribal prejudices. He clings consciously and deliberately with unshakable tenacity to the earlier traditions and the memorable example of the Prophet who, when he was offered a "Kingly Crown," if only he abjured the "heresy" of denouncing the idols of the ancient Arabs, retorted that even if they could place the sun and the moon into his hands, he would not deviate from the path of truth. What can be easier for him than to follow the path of that least resistance as many a lesser Musalman is doing to-day, and in a day receive the allegiance of 9 crores of Musalmans as a divine of unquestioned pre-eminence, and once for all hoist his traducers by their own petard ? But he knows his duty both by the country and by the 9 crore Musalmans, over whose vital interests he stands guard despite a hundred and one difficulties. Even if the credulous and the unscrupulous left him in a minority of one, he would not swerve from the path, which alone he knows to be the correct one. He has done his utmost to bring about a rapprochement between the Congress and the League and has experienced bitter disappointment, each time the dictator of the League has spurned these approaches. He has reasoned with some of the leading Musalmans, who for one reason or another have associated themselves with the League and begged them to bring to the negative controversies of the day some constructive contributions only to find that in the opinion of the League High Command the time is not yet !

In 1933-34 when there was a proposal to revive the old Swaraj Party under Dr. Ansari's leadership, he lent his full weight to the parliamentary programme and was eventually elected to the Parliamentary Sub-committee of the A.I.C.C., at the end of 1935, after the earlier Parliamentary Board had been converted into the P.S.C. His influence in the Working Committee and with Mahatma Gandhi has always counted for a great deal; but ever since the death of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari his views on questions relating to the Indian Musalmans carry even greater weight in the Congress circles.

By nature he is one of those who long to take a back seat and shrink from demonstrative situations. He is indisputably one of

the greatest orators of Urdu, whose speeches attract record audiences but this innate disinclination to face crowds leads him to decline most requests to address big gatherings. This unconquerable shyness of Maulana Azad is almost invariably misunderstood by superficial observers as over-weening pride or a pose of superiority. He has a sensitive soul, and is one of the acutest of observers, whose intelligence is sharp and whose cerebrations are quick as light. He is a shrewd judge of men, but he seldom permits himself to be read easily. In congenial company he is a sparkling conversationalist with a rare sense of humour. When not in his element he is capable of almost oppressive reticence. He can be devastating in debate and convincing in discussion for he makes apt use of the enormous storehouse of his erudition. His habits are astonishingly regular. He invariably rises at 5 in the morning. Soon after dawn the stream of visitors begins to pour in, if he is on tour, and till mid-day he has to disentangle public and personal skeins which a variety of known and unknown persons bring to him. Sometimes people bring him subtle religious problems to solve and curious doubts to dispel which he does with a patience surprising in one so sensitive. He is nothing but obliging and polite even to his traducers and it is doubtful whether any one has seen him in a temper. He loves a Turkish bath after a heavy day or a long journey, and although he quickly withdraws into himself in what may be described as the company of the "smart set," he flourishes in the company of select friends. Occasional outings with such friends are his only escapes from the "madding crowd." His personal belongings abound in the latest books, English and Oriental and journals from the Near East and Egypt. He dresses and lives simply but loves neatness. His reticence about himself is the despair of his friends who can scarcely succeed in drawing anything of a personal nature out of him.

It is difficult to compress all one can say about him into a brief sketch. He is a man of rare gifts, whose towering personality cannot be dwarfed by the others' political prejudices whether born of ignorance or of malice. In non-Muslim circles he is better known by his political association than by the still greater qualities which lend to his personality a stature rarely achieved in the intellectual world. He years and longs to find the time to give himself an opportunity for intellectual work, but the urgency of

the political call is so clearly concrete to his mind and the need of the millions so intensely felt by him that he would rather sacrifice the dearest desire of his heart than ignore this call. None who knows him can resist the charm of his personality. To know him is to love and respect and admire him.

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PORTRAIT OF A GREAT PATRIOT : MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD (1888-1958)

RASHEEDUDDIN KHAN*

A child named Mohiuddin Ahmed was born to an emigrant Indian *Pir* (Muslim divine), Maulvi Khairuddin (1831-1908), in Mecca in the month of Zul Haj 1305 AH (that is, between August 9 and September 6, 1888), from his Arab wife, Alia (d. 1899), niece of Sheikh Muhammad Zahir Vatri of Medina. The child was also named Feroze Bakth, from whose alphabets the year of his birth could be calculated according to the Arabic numerical system. The family had a distinguished lineage of Muslim divines, one of whose illustrious forebear was Maulana Jamaluddin, Sheikh Bahlol of Delhi, a contemporary of Emperor Akbar, who declined to sign the infallibility decree sponsored by Mulla Mubarak, father of Faizi and Abul Fazl. The precocious child, Ahmed, who migrated with the family to Calcutta in 1898 when he was 10, changed his name to Abul Kalam Mohiuddin Ahmed Azad Dehlavi when he was barely 13 years old, and came to be subsequently known only as Abul Kalam Azad.

Maulana Azad, the centenary of whose birth is being celebrated in many parts of the country this year, was a child prodigy and a brilliant mind revealing scintillating versatility. He composed poetry and published a poetic journal when he was

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12; completed his formal studies in Muslim theology *Dars-e-Nizamiah*; *al-Kalam* and philosophy, logic, rhetoric in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and the rudiments of traditional chemistry, astronomy and medical science by the time he was 14, and published a journal of literary and informative interests, *Lisan-us-Sidq*, at the age of 15, which amazed established scholars of Urdu like Maulana Hali and Maulana Shibli. He was great in several avocations that he could combine in the course of his life. He was a pioneer of nationalistic journalism in Urdu and an interpid editor, a stylist in Urdu prose who exhibited not only felicity of expression with profundity of thought and analyses, but also an abundant capacity of the Urdu lauguage for learned discourses in several branches of knowledge : a pursuasive political orator and a prolific publicist : a religious preacher and social reformer, recognised as an outstanding luminary of Islamic studies, both theological and secular; a creative and rationalist interpreter of the *Quran*, and undoubtedly one of the greatest in any Indian language; and above all, one of the most consummate ideologue of the composite culture and composite nationalism of India.

In the struggle for national independence, which was the main goal and central concern of his intellectual, journalistic, political and to a large measure even of religious exertions. Azad's life can perceived in three phases, which retrospectively appear as three stages of his political evolution into an integral personality.

In Phase One (1906-15; when his age was 18-27 years) Azad emerges on the Urdu literary and journalistic scene as a 'Muslim patriot', imbued with the romantic passion for promoting pan-Islamic solidarity against the worldwide tentacles of Western colonialism, and for a liberal and rationalist regeneration of the global Islamic community. In this early phase he drew inspiration from the teachings of three pacesetters of reforms in the Muslim world—the Islamic revolutionary drive and stirring call for renaissance in Asia and the Arab world and its modernisation given by Jamaluddin Afghani (1839-97); the intellectual zeal for religious reformation initiated by the Egyptian *Mufti*, well-known for his liberal and rationalist interpretation of the *Quran* and the *Shariah*, Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905); and the powerful plea for the uargent reconstruction of Arab polity based on political democracy and creative response to the challenges of the new world, made by the fiery Lebanese intellectual, Muhammad Rashid

Rida (1865-1935), whose popular journal, *Al-Manar*, provided the relevant format for Azad's *Al-Hilal.* This was also the phase when Azad sought inspiration from two of his own Muslim compatriots—Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98) and Maulana Shibli Naumani (1857-1914). Sir Syed's efforts towards rationalism and modernisation as exemplified in his writings and addresses in *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*, *Tafsir-ul-Quran*, *Maqalat* and *Khutbat-i-Ahmadiya*, became a model for Azad's writings on Muslim social reforms, even as Shibli's erudition on a wide range of Islamic studies from the biographies of the Prophet and eminent Muslims to Persian poetry and literary criticism, and above all, his humanism, wit and romantic inclinations to life and letters, provided him with a breadth of vision and broadmindedness.

However, soon he got disenchanted by Sir Syed's political conservatism and pro-British inclinations. During this phase, his main contribution is as a journalist and an editor, culminating in the publication of *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, which moulded Muslim thought and opinion in India. In *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote :

> "Because of his writings he was known in the Islamic countries probably more than any other Indian Muslim. . . . Abul Kalam Azad spoke in a new language to them (Muslims) in his weekly *Al-Hilal.* It was not only a new language in thought and approach, even its texture was different, for Azad's style was terse and virile though sometimes a little difficult because of its Persian background. The older conservative leaders among Muslims did not react favourably to all this and criticised Azad's opinions and approach. Yet not even the most learned of them could easily meet Azad in debate and argument. He was a strange mixture of medieval scholasticism, eighteenth century rationalism and the modern outlook. Abul Kalam Azad attacked this stronghold of conservatism and antinationalism not directly but by spreading ideas which undermined the Aligarh tradition. . . .

In between Phase One and Phase Two, Azad was interned in Ranchi (1916-19). These four years gave him an opportunity for contemplation and reflection and provided the necessary solitude for critical evaluation of his ideas, approaches and assumptions.

It was indeed a creative interlude for him. Much of his profound writings like *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* began in this period, and one finds a great transformation in his outlook on religion and politics once he comes out of Ranchi.

In Phase Two (1920-23; when his age was 32-35 years) Azad appears on the national sceno as the leader and ideologue of the Khilafat movement, and with Gandhiji as a pioneer mass mobiliser for civil disobedience and satyagraha. It is not adequately recognised that Azad's meeting with Gandhiji for the first time on January 18, 1920 in Delhi (barely a few weeks after his release from Ranchi) was a turning point in Azad's political life. After many hours of personal conversations, partly in the company and in the house of Hakim Ajmal Khan, Azad was probably the first—the very first—person, who fully backed Gandhiji on his newly formulated programme of non-co-operation. He was followed by Hakim Ajmal Khan. Other top national leaders of the time—late Lajpat Rai, C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru—were converted to Gandhiji's way of thinking and strategy of struggle many months later. By that time Jawaharlal Nehru was still not recognised as the leader of the first rank, nor had Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Raja-gopalachari or Rajendra Prasad emerged on the national scene. Of course Mohammed Ali Jinnah was there, prominent and respected as a top leader, hailed by many, in the words of Sarojini Naidu, as the best ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. But it was precisely on this issue of satyagraha and mass civil disobedience in 1920 that not only Jinnah violently disagreed, but also left the Congress, never to rejoin it again but to fight against it till the bitter end, in a long drawn battle, in which he castigated the Congress as a Hindu organisation and denigrated Azad as its 'Muslim show-boy.'

It is interesting to recapitulate that Gandhiji's programme of non-co-operation was first presented and endorsed in a predominantly Muslim congregation, presided over by Maulana Azad. This was the Meerut meeting of the Khilafat Committee held in May 1920.

Gandhiji and Azad remained together periodically for many weeks during 1920 and 1921, while touring the country for popularising the civil disobedience programme. In December 1920; Azad did something reminiscent of medieval Indian history. When the Sikh Guru Arjun Mal (1581-1606) had invited the great *Sufi-*

saint, Mian Meer of Lahore (1550-1635), to lay the foundation stone of Harminder temple in Amritsar, Azad invited Gandhiji 'as an embodiment of sincerity and sacrifice' to open the *Madrasa-i-Islamia* in Calcutta, in the Jama Masjid complex on December 12, 1920. And Gandhiji in his inaugural speech said : "Let this *Madrasa* produce true Muslim and true Indian . . . who would avoid slavery and die for independence."

In the Third Phase (1923-58, that is, from the age of 35 till his death at the age of 69), covering almost half of his lifetime. Azad remained a stalwart of the national movement and a most eloquent articulator and defender of the values of composite culture and secular nationalism. While he was elected Congress President twice, in 1923 when he was 35, and was the youngest President, and again in 1939, when he remained in office till 1946, the longest period for which anyone occupied that position, Maulana, however, remained a member of the Congress Working Committee continuously for 35 years.

In his life Azad travelled on three paths at different times—the path of exclusive Muslim patriotism and pan-Islamism (1906-20); the path of reconciling Muslim patriotism with the larger Indian nationalism (1920-23); and the path of thorough-going secular, democratic nationalism (1923-58). He traversed all the three paths, as if these were inevitable stages in his evolution towards the final goal of national independence : as if these phases were unavoidable, obvious and logical for anyone born in a highly traditional and orthodox Muslim family.

Probably he symbolised dramatically the entire spectrum of the socialisation process in Indian politics that appeared inevitable for a typical Indian Muslim, brought up in a conventional Muslim environment, subscribing to traditional values and norms, heir to inbuilt prejudices and given premises of social life, acquiring education in a *maktab* or a *madrasa,* circumscribed in his home family environment by customs, conventions, social attitudes, civic manners, restrictions and taboos. That is, an atmosphere in which every progressive change and attempts at modernisation were derided as slavish imitation of Western, rather British and Christian, forms nnd patterns of life, hence repugnant to the dignity of Islam and pride of India; as a stratagem of enslaving the mind and consciousness of the colonised people thereby vitiating the impulse to revolt against Western-Christian domination.

Azad's journey towards secular enlightenment began from such an ascriptive and hide-bound environment. But it is instructive to observe the paradox that exists between Azad, born in a traditional household, and Jinnah, born in a cosmopolitan household, in their trends of political development. While Azad moved from the particular to the general, from the limited to the universal, from sect and community to nation and humanism, from religion-dominated political consciousness to secular, liberal democratic consciousness : Jinnah, on the contrary, travelled just the opposite direction.

There were four basic assumptions of Maulana Azad's political credo : (i) that Hindu-Muslim unity was a decisive element not only for national independence but also for building a democratic national identity in India : (ii) that the Khilafat movement was in essence the struggle for Indian independence and, therefore, it was necessary to promote joint Hindu-Muslim mass action : (iii) that non-co-operation and boycott of British goods for the Muslims was not only a political necessity but also a religious obligation based on appropriate *Quranic* injunctions, whose validity was apparant in the circumstances in which the British Government had become a belligerent opponent : (iv) that the building of a composite nationalism and stabilising its foundations were not only politically desirable but also a duty of the Muslims, in tune with the injunctions of the *Shariah* and in pursuance of the example set by the Prophet Muhammad himself.

Like Gandhiji, Azad considered Hindu-Muslim unity as an axial principle of national liberation and national reconstruction. For both of them it was an article of faith, a moral imperative. On August 25, 1921 in his famous address to the Agra-session of the Khilafat Conference, referring to Hindu-Muslim unity with dramatic emphasis and sincerity, he said : "Friends' if I recognise any work as my life-work, it is this." And it was in this address—probably one of his greatest orations, so compact with new ideas and radical propositions—that he expatiated on the religious dimension of Hindu-Muslim unity. He said : "If the Muslims of India would like to perform their best religious and Islamic duties . . . then they must recognise that it is obligatory for the Muslims to be together with their Hindu brethren . . . and it is my belief that the Muslims in India cannot perform their best duties, until in conformity with the injunctions of Islam, in all honesty,

they establish unity and cooperation with the Hindus. This belief is based on the imperative spirit of Islam.

As a conclusive religious argument in defence of composite nationalism, he cited the example of Prophet Muhammad himself. In the very first year of Hijra (623 AD) the Prophet himself had formulated the now famous Covenant of Medina, which was adopted in a general meeting of the people—both Muslims and non-Muslims, as a document declaring that the Muslims (the *muhajeereen*—the Meccan emigrees—and the *ansaar*—the Medinian helpers) enter into a political compact with the Jewish tribes, the Christians, the Sabaens and the Pagans, living in and around Medina, for mutual security, aid and support against the belligerent invading tribes from Mecca. The document enumerated certain items of common concern and common action, and declared that in religious matters, everyone will have his own religion, "for Jews their religion and for Muslims their religion." But it categorically stated that all the parties to the Covenant have become *ummat-ul-Wahida*. Maulana Azad explicitly translated *ummat-ul-Wahida* as One Nation : *umma*=Nation; *wahida*=One. Other commentators translate it variously as One People, One Community, One Congregation, etc. Maulana argued from this innovative, though subsequently unsuccessful, experiment, of the Prophet in building a multi-religious political community even in his own time, that there is a greater and more pressing need for creating a unified nation in India, by strengthening Hindu-Muslim unity and solidarity, and indeed by bringing about multi-religious harmony for political unification and nation-building. No one before Azad, nor since, has argued so vigorously from the Islamic religious angle about the validity of constructing composite nationalism in India.

In *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, he argues powerfully about the oneness of religions/faiths (*Wahdat-i-Din*) that has been visited by the inevitable divergence of *Shariah* (law) necessitated by different socio-cultural environments, and by formalistic and institutionalised schism, promoted by the followers of the diverse faiths. In his monumental commentary on the brief seven verse opening chapter of the *Quran*, *Surat-ul-Fatiha*, (which he calls 'the natural introduction to the study of *Quran*'), Azad emphasises the doctrine of *rububiyat* as the quintessence of Islam in its universal appeal and validity. *Rububiyat* as a doctrine entails the recognition of

God as *Rabb-ul-Alameen* (Lord of all Being; author of all Existence, circumscribing all Creation). The word *Rabb* in Arabic implies 'the Cherisher', 'the Nourisher', 'the Sustainer', 'the Provider' for all His creation. The system of Divine Nurture (*Nizam-e-Rububiyat*) transcends all divisions and fragmentation of mankind based on any consideration like creed, colour, region, nation, etc. Hence *Rabb* is not the God only of one people, but of all the people. Then Azad emphasises that three attributes of God are reiterated continuously in the *Quran*, and hence, should be recognised as fundamental—namely *al-Rahman* ('the Benevolent', that is, one who gives even without seeking) and *al-Rahim* ('the Merciful', that is, one who responds when asked, as is forgiving), and *Malik-Yaum-ul-Din*) ('Master of the Day of Judgment that is, one who shall dispense justice). *Providence*, *Benevolence*, *Mercy* and *Justice*, then are the four cardinal *values* inherent in a universal, omnipotent, omnipresent God.

Azad lays stress on reason (*aql*) as the instrument of comprehension and explanation of all matters, divine and secular. He concludes his commentary of *Surat-ul-Fatiha* by saying that when such a universal God, *Rabb-ul-Alameen* guides on the *right path*—(*ehdinas-Sirat-al-Mustaqeem*) it is not the particular path of any race or nation, but the path on which there is universal consensus of the leaders of all the religions and of all right-minded human-beings, may they belong to any age and any race. Commitment to universal humanism, he says, is indeed the essence of the *Quranic* message.

II

Maulana Azad is revered without being understood. He remains only partially understood and indeed is a much misunderstood personality among the stalwarts of the Indian national movement. Because to a large bulk of our people he has been reduced to a noble 'totem' of the political tribe called the 'nationalist Muslim'—a tribe whose political legitimacy acquired credence in the prepartition milieu only as a contra-reference-point to what was then known in the vernacular as the 'League-ee Muslims.' Today for most of his compatriots Azad is part of the sentimental heritage of tne national movement, a relic, a bygone phenomenon, whose name and memory evokes appropriate

sentiments of admiration, veneration, felicitation, adoration, etc., but never rational intellectual comprehension of his life, his role, his struggles, the lesson of his tragedy, and the abiding message and relevance of his dreams.

This is partly due to the fact that the 'nationalist Hindu', whose clan has thrived and multiplied in post-partition India, and who constitutes today the mainstream of Indian polity, had always taken the so-called 'nationalist Muslim' for granted, as a natural ally in the national movement. This sometimes entailed neglect and oversight and an attitude of condescension and underestimation of the role and importance. It is not often realised that due to their convictional opposition to Muslim communalism, the habitual obedience of the nationalist Muslims to the cause and purposes of composite nationalism has been axiomatic and heroic. And for a considerable measure it was more than that of the nationalist Hindus, for an obvious situational difference. The majority status of the nationalist Hindus provided them with an ambiguity of being communal and nationalist at the same time, if they were so inclined, because almost always majority communalism can pass off as rudimentary nationalism. But minority communalism, by its very nature, stands out and shrieks, so to say, and exposes itself as 'different, 'divisive', 'separatist' and 'anti-national.' It was a gratuitous insult to refer to a thoroughgoing Indian nationalist of Muslim origin as 'nationalist Muslim', while for a Hindu, no suffix or prefix was deemed necessary.

One reason for considerable ignorance about Maulana Azad stems from the fact that in our own time and age, there are not many who can read, much less understand and appreciate the Urdu language in all its powerful thrust, allegorical beauty and sophisticated diction. It is not often realised that the alienation of the Urdu language in India is one of the cruelest cultural tragedies of our times. It has robbed us of a significant part of our historical heritage, including the heritage of the national movement.

Most of Maulana's creative works, ideological speeches and journalistic writings, memoirs and accounts, are almost all in Urdu. Apart from Humayun Kabir's English version of Maulana's Urdu narrative—called *India Wins Freedom*—recounted in successive conversations on certain aspects of the last phase of freedom struggle, that is, from the formation of Congress Ministries in the

Provinces in 1937 to Gandhiji's murder in 1948, albeit a narrative which is not only sketchy, often opinionated, and somewhat at variance with Maulana's inimitable style in Urdu imbued with subtlety and wit, there is not much of consequence, either written or spoken by Maulana, which is available in the English language. In other Indian languages what is available is still meagre. Lack of communication is obviously a serious impediment in comprehending a personality. The telling words of a contemporary Urdu poet, Majrooh, comes to mind :

> *Zabaan hamari na samjah yahaan koi Majrooh,*
> *Hum ajnabi ki tarha apney he watan mein rahey*
> (No one here understands my language, O Majrooh,
> Like a stranger, I lived in my own country)

Maulana was much misunderstood, rather deliberately, by his contemporaries, for variety of reasons—political, sectarian, factional and personal. His intellectual brilliance matched with majestic personality, provoked powerful jealously. Admiration slipping into envy, and envy degenerating into hate is not an uncommon psychological passage. In a beautiful line Ghalib says: "I have envied beyond limit, that one might suspect it to be hatred.' (*nafrat ka gumaan guzrey hai main rashk say guzra*).

The Muslim communalist could not tolerate a man so profound in Islamic exegesis and ontology, and who was capable of quoting the *Quran* and the *Sunnah* in defence of his basic credo of composite Indian nationalism. The orthodox and tradition-bound *Ulema* were disturbed by his endogeneous creativity and rationalist exertion in the interpretation of the faith (*ijtihed-fid-din*) in harmony with the great Hanbali reformer Ibn Taimiyah (1268-1328), who had emphasised God's transcendence to underline oneness of faith (*Wahdat-i-Din*) and fraternity of humankind involving reciprocal obligations. Sectarian opposition to Maulana became fierce with his continued affirmation of composite nationalism not only as a desirable political objective but also as one dictated by rational understanding of the *Shariah* and the Covenant of Medina prepared by the Prophet. His detractors derided *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* as *'Congress tafsir'*, and as a *tafsir bil ray* (interpretation by personal opinion), in order to prejudice the ignorant Muslim masses from assimilating its great message of

reason, humanism and compassion. The Muslim League had whippedup a campaign of hate against him. In the measure in which Maulana lost his Muslim political constituency, some of the Congress factional groups tried to weaken his legitimacy and hold within the party and its decision-making bodies.

Azad's fascinating personality had its own points of contradiction as well. There was always an inner tension in his conduct and style and public posture due to dichotomies that his personality had to reconcile. There was the dichotomy between a life of profound scholarship pursuing simultaneously a life of active politics; between involvement in Islamic religious reformation and commitment to secular democratic nationalism; between promoting Muslim mass consciousness on religious symbols and idioms, and yet promoting composite nationalism, involving in its wake a struggle against Muslim communalism, sectarianism and separatist politics.

Maulana Azad was one of greatest intellectuals that the national movement had produced. His intellectualism was of the classical mould and learning, a real *Alim*, spanning wide branches of knowledge from Islamic theology to Arabic and Persian literature, *al-kalam*, traditional philosophy and metaphysics, and later his interests stretched to European literature and selective philosophical and scientific studies. Allegorically speaking one might say that he was a born patrician in an age of plebian-upsurge, and despite his endeavour to identify himself with the interests and concerns of the plebians, his inborn aristocracy of the mind and learning : so evident in his scholarly speeches, profound writings, his style, his manners, his values was such that he could never really get firmly rooted in mass-culture and mass-politics. He was *with* them, but not *of* them. He knew it, and never pretended otherwise. There was always a wide chasm between him and his audience. He overawed them by his oratorical skills, his fluency, the flight of his poetic imagination, the flourish of his pen, his learned references and appropriate poetical lines. Most of his pursuasive and erudite Urdu diction most of the time went over the heads of common mortals, whose elemental response was applause and adoration, without clear understanding.

In the life of nations and civilisations, sometimes great personalities are also great tragedies. When 'time' and 'circumstance' do not harmonise with the main exertion of a personality,

discordance occurs, which casts a tragic gloom on an otherwise brilliant career. Only those personalities betray the tragic touch, whose previous accomplishments prompt expectations beyond that which can be fulfilled. The tragic element endemic in Maulana Azad's career was due to the fact that he was a Muslim in a predominantly Hindu environment, and yet bold enough to recommend and propagate composite nationalism to Muslims in variance with the prevalent political consciousness based on communalised politics. But precisely because of this he remains an undaunted symbol of defiance against unreason, sectarianism and parochialism, whose brilliant exposition remains the heritage of a generation which still has to fight the battles he fought—battles against communalism, hate and violence, for building an enlightened India of his dreams.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD AND HIS MESSAGE

S.Y. GUBBANNAVAR

EARLY LIFE

The life of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad marks a movement, restless and logical. but with some inevitable turnings, from the Moslem scholasticism of the Middle Ages (quite untouched by modern science and philosophy) to the secular state of the Indian Union and the way of life it stands for.

His father, Shaikh Mohammad Khairuddin Sahib, had migrated to Mecca and Maulana was born on 11th November, 1888 in the Darus Salam quarter of the Holy City. Maulana's father Khairuddin believed in the old ways of life and had no faith in modern education. He, therefore, arranged for Maulana's instruction at home by some of the most eminent scholars of the day. Maulana fully justified his father's decision and was able to complete his studies at the exceptionally young age of 16. Soon after he came across the writings of Sir Syed Ahmed and was greatly impressed by his views on modern education. Maulana realized that a man could not be truly educated in the modern world unless he studied modern science, philosophy and literature. He, therefore, decided to learn English and French which he continued to the last day of his life.

He was still a young man in his early twenties when he took the literary world of Northern India by storm with his flaming articles in 'Al Hilal' and 'Al Balagh'. He had already attracted

notice as a promising poet but it was his political and religious studies that marked him out as a man of outstanding abilities. He began to question prevailing customs and beliefs, social and political attitudes and even the religious traditions which he had inherited from his family. He had a conviction that unless the traditional education and traditional ways of life change. Indian Muslims could not play a creative role in the modern world.

Therefore, he created a revolutionary stir among the masses particularly the Indian Muslims who had been living in an atmosphere of dependency since the rise of British Power in India. Support for the government and opposition to the Congress were the two aspects of the policy of a majority of Indian Muslims when Maulana Azad first appeared on the Indian political scene. Maulana's clear and unambiguous call of complete identification with the National Movement and strong opposition to the forces of British imperialism at first shocked and then gave rise to discussion among the leading Muslim Politicians of the day. When he declared that independence of India was necessary not only in the interest of Indian Muslims but of the entire Muslim world, his stand appeared to the majority of the Muslim intelligentsia of the day as the starkest political heresy. Through his bold writings in 'Al Hilal' he was able to contribute to the growth of a new self-reliant spirit among the Indian Muslims, placing them alongside the nationalist forces and providing them with an emotional basis for their participation in the freedom movement by finding a new meaning in Islam. He succeeded in evolving a pattern of co-operative living in equality and partnership in the national struggle. This was no mean task.

A NATIONALIST

Maulana Azad stood as a champion of nationalism, progress, freedom and democracy and influenced the Independence Movement for nearly half a century. His deep study, wide knowledge and vast experience helped him to understand difficult situations and problems. It was these gifts which made him so great a leader and so wise a counsellor. Gandhiji appreciated his great virtues and soon he became known as one of the 'Big Five' who helped Gandhiji to mould the Freedom Movement. Maulana's faith in Gandhiji's leadership remained to the end and he was one of the

chief men to whom Gandhiji turned for advice whenever difficult problems arose. During the troubled times when it looked as if the Congress would split on the Council entry programme, it was Maulana who found honourable compromises and it was really his wisdom and political foresight which helped the Swaraj Party to enter the Councils without leaving the Congress. Soon Maulana was recognized as a national leader in his own right and he was made the President of the Congress in 1923 at the young age of 35. As a president, his was the task to cntry on negotiations both with Sir Stafford Cripps and the Cabinet Mission. He did this to the satisfaction of his colleagues on the Working Committee and the Congress Organization. He kept in the forefront the interests of the country while carrying on the discussions. It was clear that he was not at all happy about the partition of the country but like his other colleagues, he accepted it because of the circumstances in which the country was situated at the time. His great service to the nation was the way in which he exhorted his co-religionists to stand by the Independence Movement and not to emphasize the communal issue.

THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER

After independence, Maulana became the Minister for Education in the Government of India from January 1947 till the last day of his life, 22 February 1958. He died in harness, the problems which occupied his mind till the last moment of his life were those of national unity, and of education for national prosperity, for developing balanced minds and for promotion of better understanding among the peoples of India. Perhaps there are few statesmen who showed such depth of understanding and practical and sagacious approach to problems both in politics and in education at Maulana did. As Pandit Nehru expressed rightly, 'he was a man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect'.

He was first and last an educationist. In order to equalize and democratize opportunity, several schemes of scholarships were initiated of which the most noticeable was for Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes. Further, the appointment of the University Education Commission (1948) with their report of 1949, the appointment of the Secondary Education Commission (1952) with their report of 1953; the reorganization of

the All-India Council for Technical Education from its inception on 30th November 1945, to its ammended form of today; the chain of laboratories of scientific research established during the period; the establishment of Karagpur Institute of Higher Technology; the rapid development of the Indian Institute of Science; the establishment of the University Grants Commission with considerable financial resources—these are some of the highlights in the animated scene in which the Maulana moved.

It is not too much to say that the vision and the powerful personality of the Maulana gave a unity of purpose to the efforts for the phenomenal expansion of technical education in this decade. As he rightly opined in his last speech at the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education on 6th February 1958, a only fortnight before his death :

> "When I assumed charge of Education in 1947, I immediately saw that there could be no solution of our educational problems without the fullest co-operation of the Centre and the Provinces. Education was no doubt a provincial subject, but it was my considered opinion that this distinction could be maintained only when our educational targets have been achieved. Till such time, the Central Government should openly recognize that though education is a state subject, it must share this responsibility with the state Governments if we are to meet the challenge of the times".

A THEOLOGIAN

Maulana Azad had a many sided personality. He was not only a freedom fighter but a great theologian. It was the good fortune of the Maulana that the Holy City of Mecca was his birthplace, India his homeland, and Islam his religion. It was in the Holy City of Mecca that his eyes saw light for the first time. His parents settled there, seeking blessings from the sacred and holy surroundings of the Land of Prophecy. It is not unlikely that a divine and holy inspiration influenced and settled in his heart for it is only in proper and good surroundings that the blessings of God and his bounties exist. The greatness of Maulana Azad gains the highest expression in his belief in God and his correct and true understanding of the principles of Islam. He was never a

professional politician, who would wear a new garment to suit the exigencies and requirements of different occasions. He was a man of religion and as such he would not bargain or barter with his religion. He would never renounce his conviction. Religion to him was one and an invisible whole.

Maulana was a scholar. He never forsook scholarship and literature for politics. To the last he was faithful to his first love. His contribution to Islamic learning is reflected from his works: Tarjuman-al-Quaran, and Tadkirah. He was a master of three languages—Urdu, Persian and Arabic. Though he was not given to speaking English he could understand it and no political leader was more alive to the importance of English and the historic role it has played in the development of Indian Nationalism and patriotism than Maulana Azad.

His greatest service was to teach people of every religion that there are two aspects of religion. One aspect separates, differentiates and creates hatred. This is the false aspect. The other, the true aspect of religion brings people together, it creates understanding. This true spirit lies in the spirit of service, in sacrificing self for others. It implies belief in the essential unity of things. To Maulana Azad, religion was not an instrument which would make people live in self contentment and isolation with no interest in anything but themselves. It motivated people to goodness and stimulated in them the human touch. In his estimation, people could find in religion the same solice and comfort which a traveller finds in the shade of a tree on a hot summer noon.

CONCLUSION

Maulana Azad was an outstanding example of a truly cosmopolitan culture and despite his ardous work in the political and administrative fields he continued to maintain his serenity of spirit and search for a friendly and human approach to problems. He was a leading exponent of the ideal of a Secular State. Essentially a rationalist he believed that God's will must ultimately triumph. This was his faith and message to the people of his generation in India and abroad. His services to the country as a sagacious statesman, an ardent patriot and a great intellectual are invaluble. National spirit—the driving force of his life, made him an apostle of national unity and communal harmony. He stood for the

emancipated mind, the mind which is free from narrow prejudices of race language, religion or caste. He was a great man, a man of stately presence, indomitable courage and fearless behaviour who worked for the ideals of national unity, probity in administration and economic progress. His great contribution to the progress of the country is an examining example to the patriots of India.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION

K.G. Saiyidain

Maulana was first and last an educationist—an educationist in the wider and deeper sense of the word, i.e., one passionately concerned with the inculcation of the right ideals and values and attitude in the people. Ever since he started his career as a writer and journalist and launched his *Al Hilal*, his profound scholarship and his knowledge of religion, history, philosophy and literature were devoted to preaching the message of true patriotism and of the good life for the individual and the community, which knows no barriers of race or caste or creed or exclusive geographical loyalties. His powerful speeches and writings swept across the country, galvanised the hearts and minds of the older as well as the younger generation and gave them hope, courage and confidence. He taught them to respect their own culture and history but did not encourage the attitude of only looaking backward for inspiration. He was, and continued to be, forward-looking all his life.

The secret of his success as an educationist lay in the fact that he practised in his life what he preached in his works. He had the qualities of character and intellect which he wished to inculcate in the people of his country. His whole life bore a shining stamp of sincerity and truth—truth which he loved and advocated with Socratic passion; truth which makes no compromise with expediency and no concessions to ill-informed criticism or opposition,

however bitter it might be; truth for which he was prepared to pay the highest price by courting imprisonment at the hands of a foreign Government and misunderstanding and even insults at the hands of his own countrymen; truth about which he once quoted this famous verse of a Persian poet:

The message that is embedded in
my heart is not the Mulla's sermon :
It can only be uttered on the
scaffold, not from the pulpit!

No one can achieve success as an educationist unless he has caught some little spark of this divine fire.

As a Minister, who presided over the educational destinies of the country since the attainment of independence, he has left the impress of his great personality in many directions. During this fateful decade, so full of difficulties and crises, education was not able to secure adequate resources for its development. But he espoused the cause of education with vigour and succeeded in winning for it a place on the map of the Five-Year Plans of national development. While controversy raged indecisively about Basic Education, he had it firmly accepted as the pattern of national education. He had the problem of secondary education surveyed by a commission and its reconstruction was promptly initiated under his guidance. He was deeply interested in the improvement of standards in the universities and was solicitous to safeguard their due autonomy. Apart from other measures taken to strengthen higher education, he established the University Grants Commission to give special thought to its needs and problems.

His humanism could not reconcile itself to the fact that many groups and classes should be debarred from full participation in the growing life of the country, because centuries of social neglect and tyranny had deprived them of their human rights. In order to equalise and democratise opportunity, several schemes of scholarship were initiated of which the most noticeable was one for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes for which the financial provision was raised from Rs. 3 lakhs to Rs. 2 crores during his regime.

Technical education expanded and developed almost beyond

recognition during these few years. So did the programme of educational publications, under which hundreds of useful reports, brochures and monographs were brought out, including a few authoritative and scholary works like *Philosophy Eastern and Western* and the history of the struggle for freedom in 1857.

Cultural and international activities, which had hardly any place in the old Education Department before 1945, came into their own. Through the establishment of the three National Akademies and the Indian Council of Cultural Relations; through the fuller development of the Departments of Archaeology, Archives and Anthropology; through the growing relationship with UNESCO in the cause of peace and international understanding and through the promotion of cultural exchanges with many foreign countries, cultural activities received a new stimulus in the country and Indian culture a new recognition and respect abroad. As a writer and a man of culture, he was sensitive to the financial plight of writers, artists and others working in the field of culture and he sponsored a scheme under which those in really indigent circumstances could be given financial assistance. This was, no doubt, a new scheme so far as our national Government was concerned, but patronage of arts and letters by the "court" has been part of Indian tradition for centuries. What was new was his his care to see that no strings of any kind, direct or indirect, were attached to financial help from the State.

In many problems of great delicacy and complexity it was his large-hearted and balanced approach which showed us the right path. He had a phased programme formulated for the development of Hindi but insisted that it should be so implemented as to give no cause for grievance or apprehension to other national languages, which were equally dear to him. When, in the first flush of freedom and nationalism, many who had themselves received western education wanted to oust English or at least relegate it to the background, this man of vision, who was himself a product of the traditional system of eastern education, insisted that English should be retained and given an important place in our national life.

He was, above all, deeply interested in the welfare of the teacher community and worked hard not only to improve their financial condition and also to raise their social status. I know how, whenever there were any major difficulties that teachers had

to face anywhere in the country, he took a personal interest in them and they knew that they could always rely on his sympathy and understanding. I recall with poignant interest the words that he spoke at the last meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education only a fortnight before his death. They will bear repetition because they bring a farewell word of appreciation from him to hundreds of thousands of our teachers all over the country. I hope our teachers will cherish them with affection and Government and other educational authorities will honour them as a legacy :

> "Whatever may be the system that we may adopt, there can be no real improvement without an improvement in the quality of teachers. For various reasons our teachers have been unhappy in the recent past. You are aware of some of the steps taken by the Ministry to improve the condition of service of teachers and raise their status in society. One of the main achievements in the Second Five-Year Plan has been the improvement of salary scales of teachers in primary and Basic schools, Further measures for improving the morale of teachers at all levels are also constantly before me.
>
> "While these measure have gone a good deal to raise the morale of teachers, some of the good effects have been lost because of constant and carping criticisms of our existing teachers. I know that many of them are illtrained and some have come to the profession only as a last resort, but at the same time we must recognise that inspite of great difficulties they have served the nation well. We must realise their difficulties and appreciate the great service they have done to the nation by looking after the educational needs of the younger generation. Many of them have shown a devotion to their duty and a spirit of service which deserves the warmest praise from all who have the true interest of the nation at heart. I hope that the Central Government and the State Governments will keep these facts constantly in mind and do nothing which can in any way impair the morale of the teachers or make them feel that their services in the cause of education are not properly appreciated."

At this very meeting, he also gave—as if with a prophetic

vision that this was for him the last occasion to do so—his appraisal of the work of the Ministry, with the objectivity that characterised all his thinking and judgment. He stated clearly that, from the point of view of what was possible under the difficult circumstances of the last decade, there was no need for us to be apologetic, that we could hold our head high at what had been achieved during these few years. This was the assessment of the practical statesman. But, as a person of vision who could not only look back on the road that had been traversed but also see the goal ahead, he frankly confessed that from the point of view of what was desirable, progress was obviovsly inadequate and unsatisfactory. It is now our duty and the challenge of his memory to us to build a bridge between the possible and the desirable.

But as a man, the Maulana was even greater than his work as a Minister. With what grace and dignity and sense of justice did he preside over our activities ! Never interfering in details, not even greatly interested in them, unless they impinged in some way on principles or policy; always ready to help and encourage, always willing to overlook faults and weaknesses except when they encroached in any way on the public interest or the integrity of administration; always shunning personal publicity, sometimes even with indignation ! I had standing instructions to decline politely any requests that institutions, organisations, associations or buildings be associated with his name. "So long as I am a Minister, I cannot allow any such thing." He would not even accept honorary degrees from the universities. If I remember aright, he had only once accepted such a degree in the early years of his ministership. He presided with incomparable poise and dignity over the conferences of Education Ministers and the Central Advisory Boards of Education, unravelling complex issues with patience and understanding. We would sometimes be worried about possible conflicts and complications which might arise when many diverse views had to be reconciled, but not the Maulana. The same sympathy and understanding and absence of a doctrinaire approach which enabled him to deal with complex political situations guided him in the educational field and kept the keel of our educational ship steady.

34

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : A TREMENDOUS PERSONALITY

JOHN GUNTHER*

We turn now to the Working Committee, that extraordinary organisation which is the heart of the Cangress. Officially there is no precedence within the Working Committee, but three nearest the top, each of whom is a kind of district boss—in fact the political organiser and virtual dictator of his region—are Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Bombay, Sind, Madras, C.P) Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Bengal, Punjab, North-West Frontier and U.P.) and Dr. Rajendra Prasad (Bihar, Assam and Orissa).

These three names are unfamiliar. New to most of Western readers, they are difficult to pronounce, to remember. Yet these three men quite aside from the fact that next to Gandhi and Nehru they are the most important political personages in India, are tremendous personalities. Their names may mean little. But their histories, their characters mean much. Behind the difficult names are living human beings of the utmost interest and appeal. The next member of the zonal triumvirate Maulana (roughly very Reverned) Abul Kalam Azad is as different from Patel as is conceivable. That two represent utterly different worlds but the link of Congress bridges their variegation.

Maulana Abul, who is fifty, is a Muslim theologian and philosopher, one of the most learned men of the East, a book-worm intellectual, a savant, the author of the best modern

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commentary on the Koran. He was born in Mecca in 1888, and went to Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the most famous institution of learning in the Muslim world. Something of a prodigy, he was at fifteen a serious scholar in Persian, Arabic and Muslim theology. He went to India (where his father had lived) and in 1912 founded an Urdu newspaper, *Al-Hilal*, which had a sensational success. Abul was, though an orthodox Muslim, a modernist. His attitude towards Islam is reformist. He sought to bring the Muslims into the nationalist movement; he is one of the few Indians who began important agitation before Gandhiji's great entrance to the arena. As early as 1916 Abul was interned on a charge of revolutionary activity. He was released in 1920 and promptly joined the non-co-operation movement. In 1923 he was elected President of the Congress—the youngest in its history.

Abul's unique characteristic is his combination of classic theological training and modern outlook. He went to Al-Azhar, but he wants to Latinize the various Indian scripts. He is an excellent political speaker and journalist, despite his absorption in holy books.

If Patel is the ruthless fist of the Congress triumvirate, and Maulana Abul a part of the brain and spiritual enlightenment, then Dr. Rajendra Prasad is the heart.

35

MAULANA AZAD : PROFILE OF A SCHOLAR-STATESMAN

HUMAYUN KABIR

It is almost fifty years ago that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad first burst upon the Indian scene, but even to this day his countrymen—admirers no less than critics—have not been able to make up their minds as to whether he was more distinguished as a man of letters or as a statesman. He was still a young man in his early twenties when he took the literary world of Northern India by storm with his flaming articles in *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh*. He had already attracted notice as a promising poet, but it was his political and religious studies that marked him out as a man of outstanding abilities. As mere literary efforts they are something unique in the history of Urdu language and literature. Rarely has there been such a combination of rhetoric and eloquence, of wit and poverty, of biting sarcasm and lofty idealism. A new style in Urdu prose grew out of the models supplied in the editorials of *Al Hilal*. Later in his translation of the Quran, he achieved a distinction of language and thought that has rarely been equalled and never surpassed in Urdu.

It was not, however, the poetic grace or the literary excellence of his articles that captured the imagination of Indian Muslims. They had been living in an atmosphere of despondency and lack of faith since the rise of British power in India. The defeat of 1857 had deepened their loss of spirit Sir Syed Ahmed tried to restore the falling fortunes of the community by courting the

favour of the conquerors and withdrawing it from the field of active politics. Shunning of politics almost inevitably changed into opposition to politics. Such a negative policy was bad in itself, and the circumstances of the day made it a source of great danger to the country and the community. The attempt of the Muslims to withdraw from politics was in sharp opposition to the rising consciousness of nationalism among the Hindus who were becoming more and more politically active. With all his friendship and regard for the Hindu community, Sir Syed's politics therefore inevitably took a turn which, from being anti-political, became in the hands of his successors anti-Hindu.

Support for the Government and opposition to the Congress were the two aspects of the policy of a majority of Indian Muslims when Maulana Azad first appeared on the scene. To the vast majority of the semi-politically-minded Muslims of the day there seemed no alternative policy to that of Sir Syed : namely, co-operation with the British and separation from the Hindus. Maulana Azad's clear and unambiguous call of complete identification with the national movement and strong opposition to the forces of British imperialism at first shocked and then angered sections of the leading Muslim potiticians of the day. When he declared that independence of India was necessary not only in the interest of Indian Muslims but of the entire Muslim world, many of them could hardly understand what he meant. His stand appeared to the majority of the Muslim intelligentsia of the day as the starkest political heresy. In the sequel, *Al Hilal* became a focus for the resurgent spirit of Indian Muslims.

For almost fifty yers Maulana Azad stood as a champion of the claims of nationalism, progress, freedom and democracy. This has seemed a paradox to many but will not surprise those who know about his family background and unbringing. He counted among his forefathers famous religious divines and successful men of affairs, who shared the common characteristic of fearless devotion to truth. His father's maternal grandfather Maulana Munwaruddin was disgusted with the state of affairs in pre-1857 India and decided to migrate to Mecca. He could not however do so as the Revolt started while he was still in Bhopal and death overtook him before he could leave India.

Maulana Azad's father was Maulana Khairuddin who also could not reconcile himself to the degradation that seemed to

threaten the Indian Muslim. He actually did what his grandfather had wished to do, went to Mecca and settled there. He became well known throughout the Islamic world after an Arabic work of his in ten volumes was published in Egypt. He was also greatly interested in social work and was responsible for the repair of the Nahar Zubeida which was the main source of water for the people of Mecca.

Maulana Khairuddin believed in the old ways of life and had no faith in modern western education. Nor did he have much regard for the existing institutions of oriental learning in India or outside. He, therefore, arranged for Maulana Azad's instruction at home by some of the most eminent scholars of the day. Maulana Azad fully justified his father's decision and was able to complete his studies at the exceptionally young age of sixteen.

Soon after, Maulana Azad came cross the writings of Sir Syed Ahmad and was greatly impressed by his views on modern education. He realised that a man could not be truly educated in the modern world unless he studied modern science, philosophy and literature. He, therefore, decided to learn English and French and soon started to read English newspapers with the help of dictionaries. He kept up his interest in the study of English to the last day of his life.

There followed a period of great mental crisis in Maulana Azad's life. He begun to question prevailing customs and beliefs, social and political attitudes and even the religious traditions which he had inherited from his family. Differences among the different sects of Muslims raised doubt in his mind about religion itself and it was several years before he was able to achieve for himself a rational acceptance of the religious truths of Islam.

This was also the period when his political ideas began to change. For some time he was attracted by the revolutionary groups which were working for the liberation of India. When he was about twenty, he went out for a tour in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. His travels in these lands confirmed his belief that not only traditional education but the traditional ways of life must change in Muslims were to play a creative role in the modern world. Inspired by a new enthusiasm for nationalism and rational belief in religion, he started *Al Hilal* soon after his return to India.

The success of *Al Hilal* was phenomenal. It brought not

only a new personality but a new political temper into the Indian scene. It created a revolutionary stir among the masses and challenged the leadership of the Aligarh party. This party had based its politics on the principle that Musalmans must be loyal to the British rule in India. The success of *Al Hilal* disturbed the Maulana Azad proclaimed a different programme and declared that Muslims must identify themselves with the common aspiration of Indian nationhood and challenge the foundations of Britsh rule in India. The success of *Al Hilal* disturbed the Government who sought to curb it in various ways. Finally, the Government interned the intrepid young editor in an attempt to control his activities. When, after several years, Maulana Azad came out of internment in 1920, he was immediately recognised as a national leader in his own right and one of the first lieutenants of Mahatma Gandhi. He became President of the Congress in 1923 when he was barely 35. No one has become President of the Indian Congress at a comparable age. Since then his life has been identified with the Indian national struggle and it was appropriate that he should be the Congress President when the British finally agreed to hand over power to Indian hands in 1946.

This brief review will indicate that there was nothing strange in the role which Maulana Azad played in Indian public life. Descended from a family of religious divines, his upbringing and training were in keeping with the traditions of his family. His role as a reformer and a patriot was a natural development of his study of the theology and religious lore of Islam. With its emphasis of democracy, freedom and rationalism, Islam provoked in the youthful Maulana Azad a violent reaction against the servile politics, the outmoded class divisions and the mental obscurantism of the day. He stood for freedom from political bondage, feudal obsequiousness and superstitious servility. His role will seem surprising only to those who have forgotten the traditions of earlier Islam and remember the beliefs which grew up round what Englishmen have often described as the Indian Mohammedan. It is interesting to note that the orthodox scholars brought up in a purely oriental tradition responded first to Maulana Azad's call. It was among the members of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema that he found his earliest and most steadfast colleagues and followers. It was the emphasis on freedom in all aspects which attracted Maulana Azad from the cloister of the recluse

into the battle-ground of politics and kept him in the centre of the struggle till his dying day.

The politician was however never able to submerge the scholar in Maulana Azad. The scholar is concerned with the permanent values of life unlike the politician who usually concentrates on the events of the day. Maulana Azad was always more of a statesman than a diplomat or political tactician. Two qualities which marked all his political actions were his balance and sobriety and his clarity of judgment. With all a poet's sensitiveness, he never allowed his emotions to take control of his political decisions. His like or dislike of a person rarely if ever swayed his judgment. He tried to assess every situation with an objectivity that was surprising to friend and foe alike. From this balance and sobriety followed the clarity of his vision. So long as a man is rational and judges things in the light of reason, he cannot err. Mistakes in politics, as elsewhere, occur only when prejudices sway the balance and prevent us from weighing the different elements in the situation before us. His sobriety and clarity of judgment gave Maulana Azad's political decisions a kind of impersonality which awed friends and disconcerted opponents. This also explains why in the midst of the bitterest of controversies, not one word of anger, indignation or indictment ever passed his lips, even against those who took every opportunity of trying to insult and humiliate him. In the midst storm and conflict he remained unperturbed, This discipline developed in him a tremendous personality and his courage and determination won the admiration of even his worst enemies.

It was inevitable that with a personlity at once so resplendent and so reserved, all kinds of stories and legends were built up around Maulana Azad. There is the apocryphal story of his studentship in Al Azhar. As stated above, he was educated at home and went to Al Azhar only as a vistor after he had finished his studies. The tremendous reputation as a scholar which he had built up while yet in his teens is revealed in another story. He once carried on a lengthy controversy by correspondence with a well-known scholar of the day who expressed a desire to meet him in person in order to reach a decision on certain points. When the youthful Maulana arrived, the old savant received him and politely enquired why his father had sent him instead of coming himself. There is also the story of a meeting to which he was

invited as the chief of guest of the day but was refused entrance as no one could believe that a callow youth could be the well-known scholar for whom everyone was waiting.

Providence often distributes its gifts to different peisons in diverse measures. To some, it gives physical strength and to others, intellectual eminence. To some it gives affluence and to others fame and recognition. It is rarely that all these gifts are showered upon the same individual. Maulana Azad was one of the fortunate few to whom Providence gave in full measure all the things which human beings desire and yet with a contrariety which is beyond human understanding, combined all these gifts with a sensitiveness and sympathy for human suffering which turned his personal achievements into an agony at the sight of so much folly, so much futility and so much hatred all around.

It was inevitable that a man like Maulana Azad was lonely in spirit. No one who came near him failed to notice the solitariness of his spirit. Courteous, kindly and a man of infinite charm, he yet breathed an atmosphere of reserve which few could penetrate. He lived in his own world of thought, and out of his musings derived the strength to endure the giant agony of the world. With all his exquisite sense of human sufferings, there was in him a courage of endurance and an optimism about the essential goodness of man which sustained him in the midst of all his sufferings. Essentially a rationalist, he believed that God's will must ultimately triumph. This was his faith and this is his testament to the people of his generation in India and abroad.

36

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : COMMENTATOR OF THE HOLY QURAN

MAULANA SAYYID SULAIMAN NADVI

To those who have an eye on the tendencies of the age, it is obvious that Musalmans are turning their minds more and more to the Holy Quran, to the exclusion, in fact, of other sources of religious knowledge, and are endeavouring with increasing zeal and earnestness to understand the Holy Book and ponder over its message. Now, if the Quran is read only for edification and guidance in the practical conduct of life, it is easy; but if, on the other hand, it is studied with a view to discovering higher thoughts and principles and deducing positived icta of law therefrom, it is indeed most profound. The former manner of study suffices for the average believer; but there are also those among them who are in the habit of diving deep and are given to philosophic speculation. They will not be satisfied until they have got to the bottom of every commandment and probed the depths of every verse. It is obvious, however, that, this manner of study and search is not possible to every one. It is, therefore, regrettable to find these days some short-sighted and superficially minded Muslims who fancy that the Holy Quran is easy not only for connsel and guidance in daily life, but also profundities and deducing positive law from them. The result is that every Tom, Dick and Harry seems ready to venture, with great boldness, into the depths of every verse, whereas in actual fact, in venturing upon such

irresponsible expositions, he only exposes the night of his own inner self.

Doubtless, it was the two weeklies of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*, which created love of the Holy Quran among young Muslims. His manner of exposition, his skill in the art of letters and the power of his pen, with which he interpreted the verse of the Holy Quran one by one to the young men of modern education, opened before them new avenues of faith and conviction and revealed to them the whole wealth, expense and depth of the teachings of the Holy Book.

There was need that the same powerful pen should produce a complete commentary of the Holy Book, so that this fount of light and wisdom should become available in Urdu to those who do not know Arabic. The demand became persistent from 1912. The Maulana, too, had an idea that he should write a translation and commentary in Urdu. If I remember aright, I was the first to suggest, in 1913, something in the nature of a compromise between a translation and a commentary, that is, a free translation, which, though not literal, should yet be faithful to the text, accompanied with exegetical notes wherever necessary. The work required less labour. In view of the Maulana's lack of leisure, it was also possible and would have suffered to enable the avdrage student to understand the Holy Book. The Maulana appears to have accepted the suggestion and decided to write the "expository translation," though the idea of writing the larger commentary (*Al-Bayan*) too never left his mind. But with the outbreak of the Great War of 1914, commenced a regime of arrests and incarceration, to which Maulana Azad became a frequent victim. His manuscripts shared his fortune and, owing to the many vicissitudes in the author's own life, were at last scattered beyond recovery. Whenever the Maulana, in jail or out, found some leisure, he tried to put them together.

At last the auspicious time arrived and the Maulana published the first volume of his expository translation under the title of *Tarjaman-ul-Quran*. The volume contains a full commetary of Sura *Fatiha* and the free translation of five Suras from *Baqarah* to *An'am*, which comprise eight *Paras*.

Musalmans have written many commentaries of the Holy Quran and perhaps have not written even one. I say, "perhaps," because the works of earlier writers have been lost, and it would

anything but proper to pass judgment upon them. In any case, of all the commentaries and exegetical works that I have seen, I have not come across any scholar with a deeper insight into the Holy Quran than Allama Ibn Taimiya and Hafiz Ibn Qayyam, Abul Fateh Abdul Karim of Mosul (especially with regard to the beauty of literature and originality of thought) and, among the latterday writers, Hazrat Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi. The commentaries of Allama Ibn Taimiya and Hafiz Ibn Qayyam have perished, but in truth every work of theirs is but a fragment of the commentary of the Holy Quran.

As a matter of fact, commentaries are of two kinds. They are either traditional, like those of Ibn Jarir, Tabari, Tha'alabi, Qurtabi, Baghavi, Ibn Kathir, etc., or wholly rational, like those of Abu Muslim Nishapuri, Raghib Asfahani, Imam Razi of Nishapur, Mudarik, Baidavi, etc. But a commentary comprising a careful balance of reason and traditional authority, in which the traditions are thoroughly tested by the principles of evidence and reason, and reason is tiself free from the tyranny of Plato and Aristotle, was never achieved in Islam except by Allama Ibn Taimiya and Hafiz Ibn Qayyam. The '*Ulema* who followed tradition, became hopeless victims of Jewish folk-lore, while those who preferred reason lost themselves in the toils of Greek extravagances. The two above-mentioned thinker were the only ones who were at once critical of tradition and Greek thought, and knew how to separate wheat from the chaff in the latter. Above all, they derived their light from a higher source; they had drunk deep from the spring of the Prophet's wisdom and had derived their wealth of thought from his storehouse. Their commentaries were based upon truth, reason and wisdom. But the wine of their thought did not come from the vats of Greece; it came instead from the founts of Hijaz or from the divine springs of human nature itself.

It is a notable feature of the *Tarjaman-ul-Quran* that its author understands the spirit of his age and has adopted the same method to fight the evil of Westernism, which Ibn Taimiya and Ibn Qayyam had adopted to fight the evils which had sprung from the Tartar invasion. They diagnosed the cause of the downfall of the Muslims of their age to be their mental slavery to the Greeks; so the author of the *Tarjaman-ul-Quran* traces the disease of the modern Muslims to their mental slavery to Western thought. His prescription is also the same, namely, that the Word of God

should be studied in His Apostle's own language and idiom and in the light of God-given reason.

The present volume consists of two parts. The first, a part of the author's projected commentary, *Al-Bayan*, is full exposition of Sura *Fatiha* while the second is the expository translation of five Suras from *Baqarah* to *An'am*. The first part, which is in reality half the book, offers the author a wide-field for his exegetical skill and depth of thought. The Sura is expounded verse by verse and word by word in such a gripping and enlightening manner that the claim of the Sura being *Umm-ul-Kitab* or the Root of the Book stands almost demonstrated. It is also a resume of all the more important teachings and principles of Islam. The Holy Quran's manner of argument and the proofs and evidences of the Creator's benevolence and His being the Cherisher especially are treated in such detail that they compel one's admiration of the the author's range of vision and learning. What was written on these subjects by Islam Ghazzali and by Ibn Qayyam has been discussed in much greater detail in the *Tarjaman-ul-Quaran*, but in keeping with the requirements of the age. The exposition from the Holy Quran itself of *Tauhid* and its proofs, 'creation truth,' *al-Huda* and *Din* are original and profound as well as a source of faith and conviction.

The *Tarjaman-ul-Quran* is a significant product of the age. No home should be without it; every Muslim library should have a copy of it, and every young Muslim should make it a point to study it carefully.

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MAULANA AZAD : AS MAN OF LETTERS

KHWAJA AHMED FARUQI

The death of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is much more than the passing away of a great individual; it marks the end of an epoch. Even in his life he had become something of a legend, a stately symbol of a noble era fast vanishing. To study his life is to gain an insight into the sources which have brought about the present resurgence of India and of the East in general.

His role in the achievement of Indian independence is known to all, but his great contribution as a man of letters is not so well known outside the range of Urdu-reading public. He adorned a splendid period of Urdu literature and has left no literary descendants; he did not mark a stage in the development of Urdu literature; he stood alone.

Azad's was an unusual personality. He was extremely precocious in the best sense of the world. He started his paper, *Lisan-us-Sidq* (The Voice of Truth) as the age of sixteen. When he met the great poet Maulana Hali in 1904, the latter would not believe that a stripling of fifteen or sixteen cauld edit a paper so ably. The same year he met Maulana Shibli who took him to be the son of the famous Abul Kalam Azad ! At the annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayate Islam (Society for the Defence of Islam) in 1904, when the young editor of *Lisan-us-Sidq* was asked to read a paper on 'The Regional Basis of Religion', everybody thought he was deputising for the aged and scholarly Azad ! Scholarship generally comes with age but to Azad it came at sixteen.

Maulana Azad was conscious of his uniqueness, of his standing alone :

> In religion, in literature, in politics, in the highways of thought, in whichever direction I had to go, I had to go alone. On no road could I travel with the carvans of the age.
> Alas I went forth alone into the deserts of Love !
> In whatever way I set my foot, I left the Age so far behind that when I turned round to look, I could see nothing but the clouds of dust which my own speedy advance had raised :
> Not that I forsake my fellow-men
> But the caravan moves fast; how can I
> wait for those whose feet are blistered !
> My rapid advance raised blisters on my feet, but
> perhaps my feet also cleared the road of some of the
> encumbrances which littered it.

Azad was a prodigy : a wonder of this or any time. He completed Darse Nizami, a full course in Arabic and Persian, philosophy and history, in four years, which an average student takes ten to fourteen years to complete. He visited Egypt at a time when the influence of leaders like Syed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (born probably in 1840), Shaikh Muhammad Abdahu (a disciple of the former) and Sa'd Pasha (father of modern Egypt, 1860-1927) was most widely felt throughout Western Asia. Thus Azad appeared on the literary scene of India, steeped in the classical traditions of scholarship, with an intelligent grasp of all that the old school had to offer and with a keen awareness of the new. He writes in his introduction to the Quran :

> The ancient belongs to me as a legacy from my forefathers, and so far as the modern is concerned I have carved my own way . . . .
> Khizar's way to the spring of life was long and weary. I have quenched my thirst from another spring.

In 1912, Azad published his famous paper *Al Hilal* (The Crescent) which struck a new line in Urdu journalism and made a tremendous impact on the religious, social, political and educational

thought of the time. It was a period of great activity. The Indian National Congress was steadily going forward and demanding more and more rights for Indians, and the campaign to annual the partition of Bengal was in full swing. The Muslims, though irritated by its revision in 1911, were basking like sheep in the sunshine of British patronage. Azad aroused them from slumber : his prose represents the fighting spirit of the age. His sentences are arrayed majestically like a well-disciplined army; his words have the music of a military march. They had the effect of kindling afresh the flame of independence and awakening a passion for truth and candid expression. Through his bold writings in *Al Hilal* which soon reached the highest circulation figure, he was able to contribute to the growth of a new, self-reliant spirit among the Indian Muslims, placing them alongside the nationalist forces and providing them with an emotional basis for their participation in the freedom movement by finding a new meaning in Islam. He was eminently suited to the task, for he had a firm hold on the past, the present and the future; he was both an Indian and a Muslim, conscious of the great values of the past, keenly aware of contemporary needs, and eager to meet the demands of the new India that was to emerge. He succeeded in evolving a pattern of co-operative living in equality and partnership in the nationalist struggle, and in creating a strong urge for Indian emancipation.

This was no mean task. The Indo-Muslim community was in a critical stage of transition. In a renascent India it was faced with many perplexities and responsibilities as the improverished heir of a rich tradition. It had to prove itself creative and to evolve a sense of compatibility—to learn the art of living and fighting in collaboration with the rest of nationalist India. It had to integrate its role with that of others in the larger complex of diversity and to play its part in bringing about a synthesis within Indian culture. Azad brought the transcendent truths of his faith to bear appropriately on modern conditions and fought admirably against anti-nationalist trends. This he did through *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh* (The Message, 1915) with a high level of devoted creativity and dynamism. The majority of the Muslim intelligentsia, feudal and stagnant, was hand in glove with the imperialist forces. Azad by his vehemence, his slashing criticism, and by a style which exemplified all the best qualities of rhetoric, attacked its attitude and tried to deliver it from the narrow

confines of its outlook. These writings remind one of water forced into a fountain, rising to a great height and making an imposing spectacle. His style is unusual, inimitable—with sounding cadences, splendid figures, elegant classicism, majestic constructions and a wonderful wealth of poetic allusion, all contribution to an over-all vigour eminently suited to the time and to his purpose.

In 1931, Azad published his *Turjumanul Quran* (Translation and Commentary on the Quran), a book which will never drift into a literary backwater. It will live for ever, both because of its new, humanistic interpretation of the Quran and of its graceful and vivid style. By any standards, it is a masterpiece and a monument amid the works of Urdu literature. It is the product of a mind which has come to maturity through many stages of development.

> There is no belief in my heart, which has not fell all the thorns of doubt, no conviction in my soul, which has not passed through all the trials of rejection . . . . Whatever I have understood of the Quran and in whatever degree I have understood it, after all these years of seeking and searching, I have expounded in these pages.

This timeless book has been dedicated to an ordinary, unknown man, a fact which well illustrates Azad's human qualities :

> It was perhaps in December 1918 when I was interned in Ranchi. I was coming out of the mosque after the *Isha* prayers when I felt as if somebody was following me. I turned round and saw a man standing there wrapped in a blanket.
> "Do you want to speak to me ?"
> "Yes, Sir, I have come a long way to see you."
> "Wherefrom ?"
> "From beyond the Frontier."
> "When did you come ?"
> "This evening. I am a very poor man. I came on foot from Qandahar to Quetta. There I met some merchants who belonged to my country. They gave me a job and sent me to Agra. From there I have come on foot."

"I am sorry that you have had so much trouble. Why did you do it ?"

"Because I wanted you to explain to me some passages in the Holy Quran. I have read every line of *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh.*"

This man stayed several days and then returned suddenly without coming to see me before he left, because he was afraid that I would give him money for the expenses of his return journey, and he did not want to be a burden to me. I am certain that he must have made a great part of the return journey too on foot. I cannot remember his name and I do not know whether he is still living. If my memory had not failed me, I would have dedicated this book to him by name.

Azad's commentary on the opening chapter, *Suratal-Fatiha*, is superb, and this opening chapter represents the essence of the Quran. Azad has laid special emphasis on the fact that we are all the creation of the One God 'who cherishes us and sustains us all', and that the realisation of this 'can conquer all man-made differences. God is one and His beneficence is universal. Therefore whosoever believes in Him and prays to Him will be above every sect, race and community and will belong to one Humanity. "No matter what the country and what the age, all the prophets sent by God taught the same universal truth for the welfare of mankind."

His firm belief in Hindu-Muslim unity emanated from this religious conviction. He forcefully expressed this belief in a speech to a special session of the Indian National Congress in 1923 :

> If an angel were to descend from the clouds today and settle on Delhi's Qutab Minar and proclaim that India can win Swaraj (Self-rule) within two hours provided that India renounces Hindu-Muslim unity, then I would renounce Swaraj and not unity. Because if Swaraj is delayed that is a loss to India, but if unity is lost that is a loss to humanity.

Space does not permit of an adequate treatment of his speeches, but some of them deserve to rank among the masterpieces of the world's rhetorical literature. In addition to the one just quoted, the speech delivered in 1940 before the Indian

National Congress and that which he made in Juma Masjid at Delhi in 1948, exhorting Indian Muslims not to abandon the country that held so much of their synthetic cultural achievement, are the most remarkable feats of literary art and practised memory—'careful and assiduous compositions' in the best Ciceronian sense.

Azad did most of his creative work in prison. *Tazkirah* (Autobiography, 1920), *Azad ki Kahani* (The Story of Azad, dictated to Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi in prison in 1921 and published in April 1958 after Maulana's death), *Turjumanul Quran* (Commentary on the Quran seized and burnt by the British Government which he rewrote like Carlyle) and *Ghubare Khatir* (Burden of the Heart) belong to the category of the great prison literatures of the world. Even some of his best statements owe their origin to his periods of imprisonment as a satyagrahi. Here is a quotation from his statement made in January 1922 before a British court, which Gandhiji hailed as an eloquent thesis on nationalism and an oration 'deserving penal servitude for life' :

> The iniquities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriages of justice. In that list we observe a holy personage like Jesus, who had to stand in his time before a foreign court and to be convinced even as the worst of criminals. We see also in the same list Socrates, who was sentenced to be poisoned for no other crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of that Florentine martyr of truth, inventor Galileo . . . When I ponder on the great and significant history of the convicts' dock and find that the honour of standing in that place belongs to me today, my soul becomes steeped in thankfulness and praise to God.

The letters of Azad as represented by *Ghubare Khatir* and *Karavane Khayal* (The Caravan of Thought), both published in 1946, have the same spiritual fire as *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh* but their style is different. His letters are as beautiful as the colours on the wings of a butterfly, unsurpassed in exquisite delicacy of phrasing and flawless artistry. Here every sentence has blossomed into a flower. They have a warm and engaging touch. They are a sort of poetry in prose—an enchanted island of delight and

repose in prison life. (Azad spent one-seventh of his life in prison). He spun out his letters like a silkworm and nourished them with poetic ideas or autobiographical touches or philosophical abstractions; and they are most wonderfully executed. Here transient moods and moments are transformed into something at once beautiful and permanent. Judged as a whole these letters are the most decisively individual and the most sublimely personal creation in Urdu literary art.

A story is told of Degas, the famous painter (and a casual sonnet writer), who once complained to his friend Mallarme, "I cannot understand it; my poems won't come out, and yet I am full of excellent ideas." "My dear Degas," was Mallarme's reply, "poetry is not written with ideas, it is written with words." Azad too wrote with words (and in this case it was prose in poetic style)—words palpitating with numerous allusive meanings and shades. His letters are like a rainbow, it is impossible to dissect them. Nevertheless we are entranced by their inexplicable charm, an intangible loveliness more enduring than the suffering he experienced in Ahmednagar Jail.

It is not only in their style and feeling that the letters reveal the man; it is also in their subject-matter. Most of the letters of *Ghubare Khatir* consist of compressed dramatic narratives, depicted with extraordinary vividness. He turns for a moment to some scene—for example to a little sparrow which he called Moti (Pearl) or to some character (Nehru or Syed Mahmud) and in that moment many philosophical truths are highlighted. His thoughts ranged from what he called 'egotistic literature' to plants, from reflections upon music to reflections upon tea and upon the conduct of life; but his thought is never commonplace, stale or slipshod. The letters of *Ghubare Khatir* are an escape from the drudgery of prison, a voyage into the realm of the Beautiful—abounding in sentences resplendent with poetic ornaments.

Azad's writings have left a mark on the era. He influenced everybody from Maulana Mahmudul Hasan down to Muhammad Ali, Iqbal, Hasrat and Zakir Husain. He symbolised an age which was ful of intense patriotism and steadfast loyalty to a great ideal. The rhetorical eloquence of *Al Hilal*, the philosophical depth of *Al Balagh*, the long, rolling, rhythmic style of *Tazkirah*, the briliance of his commentary on the Quran, with its exquisite and thought-provoking digressions, the relish of the fine, personal touch in the

refined prose of *Ghubare Khatir*—all this can be traced to his deep scholarship coupled with his sensitive and cultivated spirit. He was a rare force in Urdu; his writings will never cease to impress and to inspire.

Abul Kalam, however, had come under the influence of modern science and literature and decided not to set himself up as a religious chief. His travels had given him a wider perspective and he resolved to draw the Muslim masses away from the barbed-wire fencing of dogma with which they had been surrounded all the time. With this purpose, he started in 1912 an Urdu paper *Al-Hilal*, and selected *Azad* as his pen-name. As was to be expected the journal created a furore. It was a new departure in journalism and from one end of the country to the other it became the centre of controversy. The old-type Muslim leaders were shocked both at the paper's radicalism and the powerful attack it made on tradition. Threats of murder were given to the young editor. Few papers in the history of Indian journalism, have exercised an influence compared to that of *Al-Hilal*. The powerful assaults bore fruit, for in 1913 the Muslim League, which was so long trying to keep Muslims away from politics and well protected in the fold of the foreign Government, changed its creed and began to speak in the language of understandable politics.

The Government also felt profoundly disturbed at this new force. The Great War gave them the opportunity. The Defence of India Act was enforced. *Al-Hilal* was the ane paper that went on pouring out fearless criticism of Government policy. The *Pioneer* of Allahabad, an exponent of the official point of view, was, in hysterics about the writings of *Al-Hilal*. Questions were raised in the House of Commons. Ultimately the security of the paper was forfeited and a fresh demand of ten thousand rupees was made. The *Al-Hilal* ceased publication. But Abul Kalam was not to be so easily defeated. He started another paper, *Al-Balagh*. This was too much for the powers that be. He was prohibited from entering the provinces of Punjab, Delhi, United Provinces, C.P. Bombay and later, even Bengal, his headquarters. Subsequently, in 1916 he was interned at Ranchi in Bihar and charged with revolutionary activity. This made him all the more powerful. He had brought about a new orientation in Muslim opinion. A few months after he was interned, the Congress and the Muslim League came to an understanding and the historical Congress-League Pact was made at Lucknow in the same year.

Abul Kalam was released in January 1920 after four years of restraint and straightway plunged into the Khilafat and the Non-co-operation movements. He took prominent part in the boycott

of the visit of the Prince of Wales and was again arrested with C.R. Das on 10th January 1921 and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. Released in the beginning of 1923 he was immediately elected President of the Indian National Congress and presided over its special session at Delhi in September of that year. He was then only 35 years old and not before nor since has any leader become president of that august body at so early an age. Jawaharlal was 39 when he was elected President. Since that date Abul Kalam Azad has maintained a supreme position in the politics of the Congress, and his election as President of the Conpress for a second term is a fitting tribute to his great services.

Abul Kalam Azad stands for a united India of Hindus and Muslims on the basis of a rational approach to common problems. To him the problems of understanding between the two as it exists, is primarily a matter of cultural adjustment. He is in favour of adopting the Latin script for Indian language.

Neither by temperament nor by conviction is he a Gandhi-ite, but he has been Gandhi's closest ally and friend since 1920. He is the most radical among the old guard of politician and generally speaking, has, among them, the most correct social sympathies.

He has remained, however, outside the pale of being a national idol, for he is no mass leader. His chief handicap is his scholarly temperament and love of book and also of the good things of life. He loves the quiet of his library rather than the hectic life of an active man of affairs. But he is seen at his best in a committee. There the rare powers of his mind are seen in all their eminence. In a way he is the link between the old and the new forces that are continually struggling for mastery in the Congress and it is no mean tribute to his abilities that his advice is sought by two such completely different leaders of modern India as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal. He is, moreover, a powerful speaker, one of the most gifted and finished orators in the whole of India. It is treat to watch him unfold a problem. He has held meetings of the All-India Congress Committee as well as huge audiences spellbound by the unbroken flow of reasoned argument and impassioned oratory.

Azad has stood all along for a rational outlook. But by temperament he lacks the perseverance so necessary for a successful politician. Even more fatal is his total lack of ambition. He continues to be in politics, because he simply cannot help it,

because his friends will not leave him alone. When C.R. Das died, a terrible gap was created in the public life of Bengal. The obvious man who could have filled it at the time, was Abul Kalam Azad but he obstinately refused to step in. Gandhiji himself travelled all the way to Calcutta, among other things, to tackle him. It was suggested that he should agree to become Mayor of Calcutta, the President of the Provincial Congress Committee and, if he is so desired, also the Leader of the Swaraj Party in the Bengal Legislative Council. But the Maulana rejected the Triple Crown and nothing could induce him to change his mind. He preferred instead to devote his time to writing a commentary on the Koran, which when published became a best seller in the entire Muslim world and is as authoritative a piece of criticism as Tilak's famous book on the text of the Gita.

His love of music is refreshing and his range of conversation is as wide as it is varied. Russia and Spain, America and the Far East, Egyptology and historic research in the Middle Eastern cradle of civilization, all these he discusses with an encyclopaedic sweep. Such men are rare in any country and very rare indeed in the India of today.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : THE GREAT AKBAR OF TODAY

C. RAJAGOPALACHARIAR

If there is no man in India today to represent the keen understanding and the synthetic ideology of the Great Akbar who ruled our land four hundred years ago, it is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. If even Akbar was disappointed by his fellow-Musalmans, why should we be surprised if Maulana Abul Kalam receives no response from thc organised Muslims of India today ? History and the thoughts of enlightened men and women will, however, not fail to appreciate the Maulana's services when passions have cooled and men's judgment's are free.

The Maulana has a grave face for the casual visitor as well as for the camera. But those who have moved closely with him know his keen sense of humour and affability. His scientific outlook and extensive scholarship are a marvel to those who associate such characteristics with English university education.

If at any time there should be a Congress of Religions and Cultures, meeting in one of the great halls of Akbar's Tomb in Agra, and if I participated in it, I would propose Maulana Abul Kalam to the presidential chair.

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MAULANA AZAD : A MAN OF A LETTERS

MOIN-UD-DIN HARRIS*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born in the year 1883, shortly after the birth of the Indian National Congress. He was born not in India, but at Mecca in Arabia.

He had from his young age the aptitude for writing; and journalism, although it was in its infancy in those days, soon attracted him. His first association with the Fourth Estate began as early as 1907 when he was not even out of his teens. He edited for some time the weekly *Vakeel*, a really good Urdu paper of those days which was being published from Amritsar.

REVOLUTIONIZED URDU JOURNALISM

The editorship of the *Vakeel* could not, however, satisfy the restless nature of Abul Kalam who must have been anxious for a better forum for the expression of his views. It was in the year 1912 that he started his own weekly the *Al-Hilal* from Calcutta. The publication of *Al-Hilal* was nothing short of a revolution in Urdu journalism. In fact it heralded a new era in the mentality of the Indian Musalmans. From week to week Abul Kulam brought to the thousands of his readers a message of new hope and regeneration. His message was to go back to the study of holy Quran, to study Islam in its pristine simplicity and to work for the building

*Editor, 'Ajmal'.

up of a new order based on human freedom equality and fraternity which was according to him the message of Islam. Naturally this was something which could not be reconciled with the political serfdom to which the Indian Musalman along with his Hindu compatriot was reduced by British imperialism. Abul Kalam's message naturally meant a struggle for Indian freedom. But it also meant something more. It meant the emancipation of several Islamic countries of the East from the hold of British imperialism.

INTERNED AT RANCHI

Preaching of this kind could not escape the attention of the bureaucracy, and *Al-Hilal* became a victim of the all-powerful Press Act. Abul Kalam was not to be deterred. *Al-Hilal* was succeeded by *Al-Balagh* the same paper in fact but only with a different name. *Al-Balagh*, however proved a very short-lived successor to *Al-Hilal* as on the 23rd March, 1916, Abul Kalam was ordered under the Defence of India Ordinance to leave the province of Bengal and on 8th July, 1916, he was interned at Ranchi.

This internment lasted for over three years. He was released on 27th December 1919. Although Abul Kalam was deprived of his freedom, these three years gave to Urdu literature and more especially to the regeneration of Islam in India something that is really valuable. It was during those years that Abul Kalam undertook the monumental work of translating the holy Kuran, and devoted his full time to this classical work which will ever remain as his greatest and most valuable contribution to Islamic literature. What an irony of the fate it is that one who has done so much for the true interpretation of Islam, should be occused even remotely of associating himself with anything that can be harmful to Islamic culture in this country.

The release of Abul Kalam coincided with the turbulent period of Rowlatt Act and the N.C.O. movement that followed in its wake. He could not remain aloof from that movement. Since then he associated himself very actively with the Congress and on 10th of December 1921, he was arrested with many other prominent Congress leaders of Bengal. He was tried and jailed for one year. The statement that Abul Kalam gave before the trying magistrate and which has been published in book form under the title *Qaul-i-Faisal* is a treatise on the philosophy of non-co-operation and a

clear case as to why Indians had adopted that method for the attainment of freedom.

It will not be out of place to reproduce two small extracts from his statement. Outlining the role of Indian Muslims in the fight of freedom he said :

> "Islam does not permit under any circumstances that Musalmans should live a life of slavery. They should either exist as a free people or choose extinction. There is no third alternative in Islam. That is why twelve years back I reminded the Musalmans through the columns of *Al-Hilal* that it was their ancient Islamic heritage to offer sacrifices and even to lay their lives in the cause of liberty. It was their religious duty that they should leave other Indian communities behind them. My preaching has not been in vain. Indian Musalmans have decided finally to join hands with their Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Parsi fellow-countrymen and to free their motherland from slavery."

The historic statement ended on the following words which were addressed to the Magistrate :

> "This is an interesting and also illuminating chapter of history in the writing of which both of us are equal participants. You have for yourself the magisterial chair over there while we have the docks here. I do admit that for the completion of this task that chair is as essential as these docks here. Let us complete this memorable chapter soon, which will assume historic importance. The historian is waiting for us and so is the future. Let us come here quickly one followed by the other and you in your turn continue to pass judgment with the same rapidity. For some days this will go on, and then the time will come when another and a higher court will be guided by the laws of God. Time will be its judge. That judge will write a judgment and it is this judgment which will be final."

Commenting on this statement under the caption "A Great Statement" Gandhiji wrote in the *Young India* on the 23rd February, 1922, that if we had not boycotted the law courts we would not have secured as valuable a document as the statement

the Maulana which provided the best political education. Gandhiji also called it a thesis on Khilafat and Nationalism.

When the judgment was delivered and the Maulana was given one year's hard labour, he remarked that it was much less than what he had expected.

Soon after his release Maulana Abul Kalam presided over the special session of the Congress held in 1923 at Delhi. Since then he has been a member of the Congress Working Committee and one who has been actively associated with all that the Congress has done during the following years.

The part that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad played during the civil disobedience movement in 1930, his incarceration during that movement and his subsequent activities are too fresh to require any detailed survey. Suffice it to say that he has been continuously in the counsels of the highest circles in the Congress and perhaps Gandhiji has relied more on his advice during the last few years than that of any other single individual.

ESSENTIALLY A MAN OF LETTERS

Although Maulana Abul Kalam has lived a very active political life extending over a quarter of a century, he is primarily and essentially a man of letters. He is a voracious reader and a versatile writer and has a command over the Urdu language which remains unsurpassed. One is really astonished at the literary work already to his credit, all of which he produced in the midst of his busy political career. To refer to one only, namely, his monumental translation of the holy Quran entitled the "Tarjuman-ul-Quran" runing into three volumes. This work alone would be quite enough to gain immortal fame for any author. Then his autobiography running into 300 and odd pages, which is more of an account of his forefathers barring a solitary chapter about his own life, is another work of equally great literary merit.

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MAULANA AZAD : A GRACIOUS FRIEND

ARUNA ASAF ALI

Were he to me one of a galaxy of leaders, whom the rank and file in a political organisation reverse as sublimations of their smaller selves, I would not have dared to pen these thoughts. I was, however, privileged to come near him because of his strong attachment to my husband. In his scale of personal relationships a friend held a very high place. In some cases his friends enjoyed privileges denied even to members of his own family, and their number was severely restricted. Although I do not remember him defining precisely the meaning of friendship, I believe I am not misinterpreting him if I say that he was attached to minds that generally responded as rationalists to the intellectual and social challenge of our age.

Maulana Saheb's association with my husband began, I believe, when he came to Delhi in 1923 to preside over the special session of the Indian National Congress. The bond that held them together had many strands. They shared a similarity of political beliefs, an impassioned attachment to the best in the cultural traditions of the Mughal age, both literary and social, and finally a firm conviction that Western liberal values were perfectly compatible with the essence of Islamic teachings. This perhaps was why Maulana Saheb chose to accept Asaf Saheb as a friend, and also his hospitality during his frequent visits to Delhi, right up to the day he joined the Central Cabinet. He felt at home with us, not because we could offer him the amenities of a prosperous home. What drew him perhaps was the opportunity for being

with someone to whom he could turn for intellectually stimulating talk, his only relaxation, and which he obviously prized more than physical comforts.

An incident that comes to my mind symbolises an attitude that was typical of him.

Often during the fateful and eventful years of 1930 to 1941 the Congress Working Committee would be compelled to hold its meetings in the months of May and June. Maulana Saheb was sensitive to the force heat of Delhi. He suffered more than others, and anxious to spare him the discomforts inevitable in the stifling atmosphere of our home in Kucha Chelan, on one occasion I suggested to my husband that Maulana Saheb should be persuaded to stay at the Birla House where some of the other colleagues generally stayed. Asaf Saheb was not quite sure if it was proper on our part to suggest this; but nevertheless agreed. Birla House was also informed that Maulana Saheb would be staying there.

On my part I was sure that the Maulana would welcome the suggestion as the unbearable heat would have affected his health, particularly as we were not in a position to lessen its severity. But I was wrong. Maulana Saheb brushed aside the suggestion in his own characteristic way. When he arrived he entered our car and, much to my embarrassment, asked to be driven to Kucha Chelan ! We were naturally overwhelmed, but the meaning of personal values acquired a new significance for me that day.

Much has been said and written and more will undoubtedly follow about Abul Kalam Azad the patriot, scholar and statesman. But I wonder if anyone from amongst his friends and colleagues will be able to write about him as a householder. Some family biographer alone can enlighten us about his childhood, early youth and young manhood, because he was extraordinarily reserved about himself and more so about his family. Very few knew what he meant to his own people. But having come to know some of them of late, I have learnt that he was an affectionate and considerate guardian to all those who depended on him. Only, he broke their heart when he refused to accept parole during his detention in Ahmednagar Fort when his wife lay dying.

Judged by his personal habits Maulana Azad had a fairly strict code of domestic discipline. His was never the ascetic's approach to the things that make life livable. But equally would he frown upon extravagance and ostentation. In the early days of our

acquaintance I mistook his protest at the elaborateness of our menus as a courteous formality. Then I noticed that, having failed to persuade me to give up wastefulness, he began restricting his meal to two courses only, ignoring the rest !

Again as a rule, in our Indian way of life, we are somewhat unaware of the virtues of punctuality. But when Maulana Saheb asked for his tea at 4.30 in the morning and lunch at 11, he did nt mean that it could be 4.35 or 11.15. Once, I remember, something went wrong somewhere and lunch was served half an hour later than usual, and Maulana Saheb went without his meal. That was naturally the very last time such a lapse was permitted. At first it appeared to me that punctuality was perhaps an end in itself with him, a merely meticulous way. But soon after I knew why he insisted on keeping to his time-table with such strictness. His early hours were precious to him as he spent them in serious reading and writing. And so, he wanted the rest of his day planned in such a way as to make it possible for him to rise refreshed every morning.

A political leader of his eminence has to handle men from all walks of life. Maulana Saheb had to suffer fools as well as cross swords with men of great stature. But he would relax only in the company of those who were more or less conversant with the rich treasures of Urdu and Persian literature, medieval and modern history and theology. It was never very easy therefore to help him to relax. More often than not, it was a matter of his host and he sitting and talking for hours together. He wanted an audience of minds capable of taking in what he had to say and if, on race occasions, we were able to invite a few such, Maulana Saheb's conversational brilliance, according to Afaf Saheb, would surpass his oratorical skill. As for myself, all I could understand as a very bewildered and ignorant observer from the wings was that for every quotation presented by others he recalled several more to the delight and admiration of those assembled.

He liked taking long drives, particularly to the historical sites around Delhi. Besides the known monuments, we would wander amidst the ruins surrounding them and he would recount legends that had grown around a particular bridge, mosque or house, and his companions would marvel at his memory, his capacity for detailed observation. Once he expressed a desire to see Suraj Kund near Tughlakabad, and we set forth in search of it before

sunrise. We lost our way but a shephered boy led us to the spot. The Maulana recited a Persian couplet which said : Knowledge is not the prerogative of the lettered. Behind his austere expression lay an endless capacity for human comprehension.

At the risk of being personal, I cannot help recalling the great understanding he gave me in the hour of my personal grief even though politically I had drifted away from the Congress. One day he related a story he said he had read somewhere, and he wanted me to listen carefully. A poor peasant had an only son. He had worked very hard to enable his son to complete his schooling. After the boy's success in his examination he was sent to a neighbouring city so that he could start life as an office clerk, his life's ambition. One morning he received a telegram and thought that it must be from his son giving him glad tidings of his success in securing work. But the peasant was illiterate and could not read. So he hurried to the village school-teacher to have the telegram read. The teacher shock his head, looked into his eyes and told him that his son was dead, that he was killed in a road accident. The peasant's heart stood still and he wept bitterly. After some time he calmed down and left the school-teacher's cottage. A little later the teacher thought he heard someone ploughing. He wondered who could have started working his field at that time of the night. He went out with his lantern to see who it could be, and he found the stricken peasant busy ploughing. Maulana Saheb said : "You see he had found the remedy for his pain, work."

Tolerance, to him, did not merely mean religious tolerance. He believed in the absolute right of an individual to differ and to hold whatever opinions he believed to be correct. But he emphasised the need for beliefs. So long as the ends were good and consistent with a rational code of ethics, and people who pursued them were also prepared to suffer for them, he tried to understand them, even though he did not necessarily agre with them. Once the Maulana sensed insincerity and sycophancy in any individual he turned away from him, and no special pleading could make him after his opinion. He was intolerant of cant and all that goes with it.

These fragments from a past have flitted back into my consciousness after a decade and a half. But partial amnesia has

claimed much that should have remained vivid. In attempting to record them today I have in a very inadequate way attempted to sketch for our mourning people Maulana Azad's bright and human personality.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

MUSHIRUL HAQ

Born in 1888, Firoz Bakht (of exalted destiny), commonly called Muhiyuddin Ahmad, was two when his parents settled at Calcutta: his father, Maulana Khairuddin, became famous here as a spiritual guide.

Still in his teens, Muhiyuddin using the pseudonym Abul Kalam Azad acquired a high reputation for his writings on religion and literature in the standard Urdu journals of the time. The education Azad received, mostly from his father, was traditional. He did not go to any Madrasah, nor did he attend any modern institution of western education. Learning at home he completed the traditional course of higher Islamic education at sixteen instead of the normal twenty or twenty-five. About the same time he was exposed to the writings of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Keeping it a secret from his father, he started learning English and by his own effort acquired enough knowledge of the language to study advanced books on history and philosophy.

This led him, although unnoticed by others, to the stage of what he called—'atheism' and 'sinfulness.' Azad remained in this stage of spiritual dilemma till the age of twenty-two. About the same time Azad's political ideas were also in turmoil. He wanted to see his country free from the British rule. But he did not approve of the Congress movement on account of its 'slowness' : also he could not joint the Muslim League whose political goal he found unpredictable. Thus he associated himself with the Hindu

revolutionaries of Bengal in spite of their 'exclusive' and indifferent attitude to the Muslims. He managed, however, to convince them that the systematic exclusion of the Muslims from the group would ultimately make political struggle much more difficult.

For politicalising his community Azad started from July 13, 1912 an Urdu weekly, the *Al-Hilal* (The Crescent), from Calcutta. Its influence was prodigious. Azad was politically and religiously radical. The paper . . . shocked the conservatives and created a furore; but there were many Muslims ready to follow him. In the pages of the *Al-Hilal* Azad began to criticize the 'loyal' attitude of the Muslims of the British, and the 'hostile' attitude of the British to the Muslim world in general. The Government of Bengal, unhappy with editorial policy, put pressure on the paper. Meanwhile World War I broke out and publication was banned in 1914 by the Bengal Government. From November 12, 1915, Abul Kalam started a new weekly, the *Al-Balagh*, from Calcutta, which continued till March 31, 1916. The publication of the *Al-Balagh* was also banned by the Government of Bengal and Maulana Azad was exiled from Calcutta under the Defence of India Regulations. The Governments of Punjab, Delhi, U.P. and Bombay had already prohibited his entry into their provinces under the same Regulations. The only province he could conveniently stay in was Bihar, and he went, therefore, to Ranchi, where he was interned till January 1, 1920.

From 1920 till 1945 Abul Kalam Azad was in and out of prison a number of times. After he was released from Ranchi he was elected President of the All-India Khilafat Committee (Calcutta session in 1920), and President of the Unity Conference (Delhi) in 1924. In 1928 he presided over the Nationalist Muslim Conference. He was appointed in 1937, a member of the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to guide the Provincial Congress Ministries. He was twice elected President of the Indian National Congress, the first time in 1923 when he was only thirty-five years old, and the second time in 1940. He continued as the President of the Congress till 1946, for no election was held during this period as almost every Congress leader was in prison on account of the Quit India Movement (1942). After the leaders were released Maulana Azad, as the President of the Congress, led the negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission in 1946, and when India became independent he was appointed Education Minister,

a position in which he continued till his death on February 22, 1958.

Azad's religious ideas were not widely influential. He expressed himself in Urdu, and thus limited himself to a particular group. The majority of the Indians did not really know what Azad was saying. Another reason was political. He was in the Congress, and was considered a party-man. Thus whatever he said about the unity of religion was taken by many Muslims, who used to read him, as the reflection of his political ideas, and, therefore, had to be discarded. Also, on the question of Muslims' traditional religious education, Azad was unorthodox. He was among those few who were not shaken in their faith in composite nationalism even by partition. He was a great orator and a matchless writer.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : THE PRESIDENT OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

MAHADEV DESAI

I

INTRODUCTION

When Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was elected as President of the Ramgarh Congress in March 1940 by 1854 votes as against 183 recorded for his opponent, there was no surprise expressed nor were any surmises made by the Indian Press. With them it was a foregone conclusion. In the British Press, however, all kinds of conjectures were made and conclusions drawn. The election, it was intended to demonstrate that Congress stands for Muslims and that Muslims stand by the Congress. It was also suggested that it was a sop to those whose sympathies were for the Muslim League, but which might yet be won for the Congress. It was no such thing, however. The Hindu-Muslim tension which is alleged to be worse today than ever before had nothing to do with the election. His name was on every lip in 1938, and if he had not withdrawn his name at the eleventh hour he would have been elected President of the Tripuri Congress in 1939 by an overwhelming majority if not unanimously.

The election of a Muslim President is nothing new in the annals of the Congress. In pre-Gandhian days there had been

Hindu, Parsi, Sikh, Christian countrymen, and not the ugliest vicissitudes of the movement have made him alter his attitude even by a hair's breadth. "I stand exactly where I stood," he declared in his memorable Presidential Address at Ramgarh, "when in 1912 I addressed them [his co-religionists] on this issue. I have given thought to all those innumerable occurrences which have happened since then; my eyes have watched them, my mind has pondered over them. These events did not merely pass me by; I was in the midst of them, a participant; and I examined every circumstance with care. I cannot be false to what I have myself seen and observed; I cannot quarrel with my own convictions; I cannot stifle the voice of my conscience. I repeat today what I have said throughout the entire period, that the ninety millions of Muslims of India have no other right course of action than the one to which invited them in 1912." There had been innumerable ugly manifestations of communal discord, erstwhile friends and co-workers have left and gone over to the other camp, the gulf between the two communities has widened with the years, but he remains firm and steadfast as a rock, determined to stand even alone if the rest of the Muslim world were to foresake and revile him. His faith in the necessity of Hindu-Muslim Unity and in the common destiny of Hindus and Muslims burns brighter than ever before. It is this fact that has endeared him to the vast number of his countrymen, who by an overwhelming majority elected him to be the president of the Congress for this critical year. I propose to give in the pages that follow a brief sketch of the life and career of this remarkable man.

For Western readers, who do not know the Maulana Saheb at all, the work should have obvious value. Considerable study has been made of the life and work of Sir Syed Amhed Khan by Western scholars. He was the earliest torch-bearer of Western learning among the Mussalmans and his forceful personality and volcanic energy have left an indelible impress on Muslim India. That circumstance by itself should have been enough to attract the attention of Western scholars and compel them to acquaint the Western world with his life and work. But there was another and more powerful reason. If he worked a revolution in the Muslim mind, he also struck the Englishman as one of the staunchest supporters of British rule in India. In a sense, therefore, their effort to acquaint the Western world with Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's work

was by way of fulfilment of a debt they owed to the Muslims of India. The Maulana Saheb has been a rebel against British rule for over a quarter of a century. But he has been a non-violence rebel and he has not a trace of ill-will against the British people. It is, therefore, necessary for Western readers, especially the British, to know something about him. For the time will surely come when the British people will realize that interpid souls like Gandhi, Nehru and the Maulana, who rebelled against British Imperialism, rendered through that very rebellion an inestimable service to the British people.

For Indian readers who have the cause of Hindu-Muslim Unity at heart anything that can promote it, in however small a measure, should be of distinct value. We have outlived the days of speeches, conferences and resolutions. Each one of us has to be an exemplar, however, humble, of what a servant of his Motherland ought to be. Unless in thought, word and deed we live the message of communal peace and harmony, true unity will not come and without it independence will be impossible and, even if possible not worth having. The Maulana has, above everything else, lived that message, and therefore, a proper appreciation of his life and work should serve as a small contribution to the great cause.

II

A NOBLE ANCESTRY

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad traces his descent from an ancestor who made a name for himself in the reign of the Moghul Emperor Akbar. This ancestor's name was Shaikh Jamaluddin Dehlavi, referred to in Muslim annals as Rahimatullah Ale. The last two epithets signify a saint on whom the grace of God has descended. He not only led a saintly and unwordly life, but was a divine of great repute, having to his credit a number of books which are held in high esteem to this day. Among these is a commentary on the most trustworthy text of the Hadis (Islamic Traditions) which is regarded as an authority by which Muslim divines swear. He had numerous disciples, among whom was Khane Azam. the brother of the Emperor Akbar. The Emperor Akbar, it is said, wanted to give royal recongnition to his learning placing him at the head of the Central College of Theology. He would fain have

given him other rewards, but he declined them all. Then there came in his saintly and unpretentious life an occasion when even he had to assert himself against the royal will.

This incident compels for a moment a peep into the life and times of Akbar. Akbar's toleration for all religions is known to history. He who taught him this toleration was Mulla Mubarak, who had to suffer considerable ostracism at the hands of orthodox divines of the day. Abul Fazal, his son, therefore, inculcated the value of toleration for all beliefs and it was from him that Akbar imbibed the spirit of impartial inquiry. This led to the establishment of an Ibadatkhana (prayer house), where the heads and scholars of various religions were invited to come and hold free discussions. Abul Fazl once proposed as a subject of discussion that the King should be regarded not only as the temporal head but also as the spiritual guide of his subjects. The immediate occasion for this, explained the Maulana to me, was quite interesting. With his profound knowledge of Moghul history, the Maulana said : "There had been a quarrel in Mathura between Hindus and Muslims, and some Hindus had razed to the ground a mosque. Akbar wanted to save the Hindus and pleaded that they should be forgiven. But the Muslim divines were up in arms against them. Mulla Mubarak, in order to reduce the influence of the Muslim divines, thought of this clever way of having a proposition discussed and established by the consent of the divines themselves." Now, how could the Muslim divines resist a proposition which affected the authority of Akbar ? "They came to a decision," says an historian, "which though they called a compromise gave away in fact, the whole question. They drew up a document in which the Emperor was certified to be a just ruler, and such was assigned the rank of a *Mujtahid*, that is an infallible authority in all matters relating to Islam." Abul Fazl's father, Mulla Mubarak, signed the document and invited the other principal divines in the land to do likewise. The divines in Agra, Jaunpur and other places signed the document, and so did some of the divines in Delhi. But Shaikh Jamaluddin, the ancestor of the subject of this memoir, refused to sign the document, along with a few others who followed his lead. Whether he incurred the wrath of the Emperor we have no knowledge, but the ancestor left India and repaired to Mecca.

"So it is your earliest known ancestor," said I to the Maulana, "who has left the proud legacy of Satyagraha for you."

"You can certainly say so" said the Maulana, with a smile, "It was an instance of Satyagraha. But for that matter I can give you another instance in the life of a later ancestor.' "

"I should be grateful," said I. And the Maulana proceeded to tell me in brief the story of other ancestors. "I am the ninth or tenth in paternal descent from Shaikh Jamaluddin," he said. "I need not bother you with the whole genealogy, but I may say with thankfulness that the popular belief that wealth and learning do not endure beyond three or four consecutive ancestors has been falsfied in the case of my family. I can say that there was not one of my ancestors but was noted for his learning and *sufism* (mysticism). I shall tell you the story of Shaikh Muhammad, an ancestor who flourished in the time of Emperor Jehangir. Someone started the practice of doing *Koarnish* (obeisance) to the Emperor, and all—even the divines - were expected to do likewise. Most of the divines in Delhi agreed to follow the practice. Not so Shaikh Muhammad, my ancestor. That kind of obeisance, he said, is due only to God and cannot be given to an earthly king. Shaikh Jamaluddin, as you know, escaped without any dire consequence. But not so Shaikh Muhammad. He was sentenced to be imprisoned in the Fort of Gwalior for four years for thus refusing to bend the knee to Baal."

"For generations," added the Maulana, "it remained a kind of family tradition not to accept any office or place of power. Later Shaik Sarajuddin, a great grandfather, accepted the Chief Judgeship and since his time the tradition may be said to have been broken. Those who followed him began to accept offices and my grandfather was the last of the Rukn-ul-Mudarassin (Pillars of Learning) appointed by a Moghul Emperor."

A certain amount of legitimate pride that is born of a noble ancestry and an aristocracy of learning may thus be said to run in the Maulana Saheb's blood. Indeed, in one respect he has gone one better than his proud ancestors. Endowed with a lofty intellect and learning which if not unequalled is certainly unsurpassed, he has collected round himself no disciples, as many of his ancestors and even his own father did. With a reserve that is often mistaken for conceited aloofness, he has chosen to live severely alone buried in his books and content wit being his own student and disciple.

III

PARENTAGE AND EARLY YEARS

The Maulana's father, Muhammad Khairuddin, carried out in his life all the traditions of the ancient sire, Shaikh Jamaluddin. Like him he was both a learned divine and a *sufi* (mystic). He wrote numerous books in Arabic and Persian, but his life and temperament were coloured more by the stoic simplicity and contemplation of the *sufis*. He had thousands of disciples, not only in Delhi but in Gujarat, Kathiawad and Bombay in the west and in Calcutta in the east.

He might well have lived his pious and learned life in Delhi and pursued the noble professon of his forefathers. But even the pious could not live in those days unmolested. What happened in Delhi, after the fall of that city in 1857, has left a dark stain on British military history. The rebels had no doubt indulged in violence, but those who vanquished them beat their ghastliest record. "All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered,' records Montgomery Martin, "were bayonetted on the spot; and the numbers was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty and fifty persons were hiding. These were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed." "Harmless citizens were shot clasping their hands for mercy. Trembling old men were cut down .... The people of Delhi had expiated, many times over, the crimes of the mutineers. Tens of thousands of men and women and children were wandering for no crime homeless over the country. What they had left behind was lost to them for ever; for the soldiers, going from house to house and from street to street, ferreted out every article of value, and smashed to pieces whatever they could not carry away" (Holmes). Mr. C.F. Andrews has recorded in his biographical sketch ot Zakaullah, how that pious man's family suffered without any fault whatsoever, and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who helped the British during those days more than any other single man, found that when he went to Delhi his uncle had been murdered and his mother had to seek refuge in a servant's house. The Maulana's father was one of the thousands who fled for their lives. He thought it wise to leave this troubled land and retire to

his learning to others. Part of the curriculum is a kind of teachership course. No course is regarded as complete and no certificate as Alim is issued unless and until the candidate has proved his capacity to teach the same course to a number of pupils. The young Abul Kalam was thus a pupil-teacher at the age of fourteen. He has told me a delicious story of those days. "I had," he said, "among my pupils an old Pathan with a venerable beard. The poor man was rather dull-witted and I had not the patience commensurate to his slowness. For days I had tried hard to din into his head the distiction between *Kayas* (Deductive) and *Istakra* (Inductive) logic. I explained the distinction between reasoning from the general to the particular and vice versa by saying that '*Kayas* is coming down from above and *Istakra* is going up from below.' I thought that was the easiest way to make him remember. The next day I asked him to explain the distinction. He had got it all the wrong way. I lost my temper and flung the book in his face, saying : 'You are never going to learn, get back home and eat grass.' The old Pathan said nothing but went without his meal the whole day. When my father came to know about this he was in a towering rage. He immediately called me and sternly said : 'Aren't you ashamed of your conduct ? Don't you see that he is as old as your father ? Go and apologize to him immediately and implore him to take his food.' The old Pathan behaved as though nothing had happened. He said I was his teacher and had every right to punish him and that there was no occasion for me to ask for his forgiveness. This made me all the more ashamed of myself, and I did not leave him until I had made him eat his meal."

The main formative influence of these tender years was that of his father from whom he may be said to have inherited many of his habits and his temperament. "My father was of a severely retiring temperament. He had thousands of disciples who would come to see him, but I never saw him go out to call on any-one except on the Molud Shareef Day (the Prophet's birthday) or the Id Day, and one those days too the visit was confined to only one disciple. There was a stern simplicity about everything in the house. He had an utter dislike of things modern, and there was no furniture but a mat on which guests of the highest to the lowest station in life were invited to sit. Among these were men like Nawabs and the son of Tipu Sultan. His dress, like his wife,

was of stoic simplicity and I never saw him wear a coat with buttons. Dreading as he did the very smell of modern civilization, giving us children any British training was farthest from his thoughts, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan had led the standard of revolt against the forces of conservatism and made fervent appeals to the Muslim community to go in for a study of English and modern science. My father would not tolerate this and made me and my brother follow the old way of education. It was, therefore, out of the question for me to think of going to an English school. He, however, wanted me to aquire a name among the most learned and so sent me in 1905 to Egypt at his own expense for advanced Arabic studies in the famous Al Azhar University of Cairo. I stayed there for two years and returned to India in 1907. It was only after the death of my farther in 1909 that at the instance of a friend, I began to learn English with the help of a grammar and a dictionary." "But," added the Maulana, "I am not sorry that my father did not send me to an English school. I lost nothing and I think, I gained much from having to depend on my own resources to learn the English I needed to learn. I saved plenty of time and energy and learnt only the things I should."

As I have said before, the Maulana's father had thousands of disciples. There was among these quite a fair proportion of Hindus. They put him all kinds of questions, and he opened out before them will the same warmth and kindliness as before his Muslim disciples. There is thus nothing surprising in the son growing into an unflinching advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity.

IV

A PRODIGY

Though young Abul Kalam inherited from his father his retiring nature, his insatiable thirst for knowledge in all spheres would not let him reconcile himself to the life of a divine. He established contact with the outside world through books and newspapers and by interesting himself in the live controversies of the day. He seems to have been a born writer and journalist, as before he was out of his teens he had several journals to his credit. *Lisanus Sidq* (*The Voice of Truth*) was his first venture in this direction, issued when he was barely fourteen years of age. No

subject seemed to be beyond his understanding and in no matter would he shrink from uttering the harsh truth. He would express himself fearlessly on all topics and would not hesitate even to review books by writers of repute. He thus happened to write a critical review of the *Life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* by the great Urdu scholar and poet Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali. This attracted wide attention, but evidently no man of note had yet met this rising author and journalist.

It appears that about the same period he was invited to deliver an important public speech. He had already addressed small audiences and spoken before literary circles, but to be invited to address a distinguished audience in Lahore was for him a unique occasion. There is in Lahore an association called the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, which had invited the editor of the sparkling journal *Lisanus Sidq* to deliver the annual address in 1904, without apparently knowing who the editor was. The audience at the meeting included distinguished people like the great poet Hali, the author of the work referred to in the foregoing paragraph, the great Urdu prose writer Nazir Ahmed, the brilliant poet Shaikh Muhammad Iqbal and others. The subject of the lecture was "The Rational Basis of Religion," and no one in his wildest dreams would have imagined that a stripling of fifteen or sixteen would dare to address a learned audience on such a difficult subject as the one set for the year. When the speaker was introduced, the poet Hali, whose book the speaker had reviewed in detail, thought that the lad must be the son of the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad! There was no limit to his astonishment when he came to know that the lad was no other than the famous Maulana himself, the editor of *Lisanus Sidq*. The speech was to them even a greater surprise and the lad made for himself that day a name among the Muslim intelligentsia as the coming man in Muslim India. The poet Hali described him as "an old head on young shoulders."

Earlier than this, at the age of fourteen, he had tried his hand quite successfully at poetry and even issued a journal called *Nerange Alam*, which published poetry composed by rising Urdu poets. He would not only write poetry for this journal but even take part in what are known as *mushairas*—poetic contests. At a place near Garden Reach these poets—those who were budding and those in full bloom—used to meet and indulge in these delectable

poetic gymnastics. Recurring or rhyming words in the latter half of a couplet would be announced ot a meeting, and the poets would be called upon to produce full couplets at a string of them making up a poem or a stanza. Our young poet would always take part in these contests, and always come out with flying colours. Nadirkhan, a pupil of the great poet Ghalib, old in years and wisdom, could not bring himself to believe that this little boy could be producing his own poetry. He felt sure the boy was plagiarizing or was perhaps acting as somebody's understudy who wanted to bring the child forward into unmerited fame. One day as our young poet was inspecting books at a bookshop, Nadirkhan happened to pass by. He accosted the young man with these words : "Hallo, you do roll out couplet upon couplet in our *mushairas*, but how I to know they are your own genuine compositions ? You may, for aught I know, be getting them done by someone else and palming them off as yours on us. But come along, I have a ready test today. Here is a *tarch—Yad na ho, shad na ho, abad na ho*. Out with the couplets." The young poet was very much put out, but his eagerness to vindicate himself got the better of his anger and immediately he rolled out couplet after couplet to the utter amazement of Nadirkhan who threw all decorum to the wind and started dancing and shouting with joy : "Subhan Allah, Subhan Allah," right in front of the shop and in the midst of the bazaar. Old Nadirkhan confessed that he whom he had so long looked upon as a pretender was a better poet than many he knew. It may be mentioned in passing that "Azad" was the pseudonym adopted by the young poet, and it has survived the period of poetry.

But Abul Kalam Azad was not a man to rest content with these easy laurels. The journals of poetry and literary criticism were just pleasant pastimes, not worthy of concentrating all one's energies on. The canker of inquiry had begun its work. The spirit of questioning was awake, and he had already begun to ask himself whither he was drifting. The sojourn in Iraq and Syria and Egypt in 1905-7 had stimulated this spirit, and on return he had found the province of Bengal seething with discontent, ringing with new cries and ready to hurl defiance at those in authority. Bengal had been partitioned and the youthful mind of Abul Kalam would find no peace until he also had given his share to the movement that was in full swing. Abul Kalam met some of the anarchists

and terrorists of those days, and frankly his leanings were definitely towards them. How far he had committed himself I have not inquired, but he had already become an object of suspicion and the Criminal Intelligence Department were watching him.

But perhaps the thing that was uppermost in his mind was the future of Islam and the ways and means of ameliorating the condition of his co-religionists. The first effect of Sir Syed Ahmed's writings was to stimulate this desire to serve the community, the desire to broaden one's outlook, to study the prevailing currents of thought and to form one's own opinion on matters of moment. He had indeed inherited a great intellectual and spiritual legacy, but was that enough to satisfy the thirst of the spirit ? The old orthodoxy seemed to be narrow and even faith in God and the accepted tenets suffered a rude shock. The more he heard and read, the more he was inclined to doubt what he had learnt and taken for granted and for a moment all the old moorings seemed to have snapped. He studied the Quran again, examined the teachings afresh, and in the calm light of his own dispassionate thinking, faith was revived; the thought, which had for a moment possessed him, of putting an end to his own life vanished like an ugly dream, and a new vista of service and purposeful life appeared before him. The old orthodoxy had fled but it had not left a vacuum. A new belief had come, as a result of the spirit's wrestling with the doubts and suspicious that had arisen in the mind. A radical spirit of reform and even revolution was born. The great father who had given him education and sent him abroad for further studies was now no more. The boy was left free to build a modern edifice on the ancient foundations that the father had laid for him. Whether he would have welcomed the direction in which the intellectual energy of the son was now running it is difficult to say and perhaps futile to speculate.

The concluding paragraph of his introduction to his translation of the Quran may be reproduced in this connection. It gives us a glimpse into the processes of his thought and also affords a striking instance of his elusive style :

"It is the vogue among scholars and critics these days to distinguish the ancient from the modern. But I recognize no such distinction. The ancient belongs to me as a legacy from my forefathers, and so far as the modern is concerned, I have

carved my own way. The modern trends of thought are as familiar to me as every nook and corner of the ancient.

A wassailer I have been,
Strict puritan too,
Both, in my eye,
Are one and the same.*

"From the very first day I refused to be content with the legacy that family, education and environment had given me; the trammels of conservatism could not bind me in any way, and the thirst of inquiry never left me in any walk of life.

There was not a nook for knowledge
But my passion led me to explore;
My barn was full and yet
My grainpicking went on as before.*

"There is no conviction of mine but was riddled with all the thorns of doubt; there is no spiritual belief but has passed through all the vicissitudes of unbelief. I have quaffed the poison from every poison-jar even as I have tried all the antidotes that the science of healing has prescribed. When I was thirsty my thirst was unlike that of others; nor was the peace that has filled me since, obtained from the common spring.

Long and weary was Khizar's way
To the spring of Life;
I have slaked my thirst
From another spring."*

V

THE BIRTH OF "AL HILAL"

Before I describe the emergence of the young Maulana on the

*Free rendering of Urdu and Persian verses quoted by the Maulana.

political horizon of India, I must make a rapid survey of the British policy *vis-a-vis* the Hindus and Muslims and the resultant Hindu-Muslim relations when he appeared on the scene. The Indian Rebellion of 1857, unorganized and confined to parts of North India as it was, may be said to have given the Britisher the key to the consolidation of the foundation of British rule in India. Though there had been wars between the Hindus and the Muslims, the Rebellion had found them united for a common object, however vague it was, and one can trace the beginnings of the policy of Divide and Rule in the utterances of the British rulers of those days like Sir Bartle Frere. But the policy remained quiescent so long as the National movement had not been started. The starting of the movement gave the British rulers the signal for alarm. Lord Dufferin started the double game of uttering on the one hand honeyed words to the protagonists of the Nationalist movement and on the other hand, words of warning to the Mussalmans. He invited the late A.O. Hume, father of the Indian National Congress, to make the Congress a political organization and invited Congress delegates to garden parties, but at the same time he made up his mind that "India is not a country in which the machinery of European democratic agitation can be applied with impunity," and said in his minute on Reforms : "Having regard to the relation in numbers, in condition, in status, and in qualifications for Government of what may be called the Europeanized or educated section of the Indian people as compared with the masses that constitute the bulk of the nation, I am convinced that we should be falling into a great error, if miscalculating the force and value of the Congress movement and the influence of its supporters and advocaters, whether in the Press or elsewhere, we were to relax in the slightest degree our grasp of the supreme administration of the country." It was he who started the division of India into two irreconcilable camps. "But perhaps", he said, "the most patent characteristic of our Indian cosmos is its division into two mighty communities as distinct from each other as the poles asunder in their religious faith, their historical antecedents, their social organization and their natural aptitudes; on the one hand, the Hindus, numbering 190 millions, with their polytheistic beliefs, their temples adorned with images and idols, their veneration for the sacred cow, their elaborate caste distinctions and their habits of submission to successive conquerors—on

the other hand, the Mahomedans, a nation of 50 millions, with their monotheism, their iconoclastic fanaticism, their animal sacrifices, their social equality and their rememberance of the days when enthroned at Delhi they reigned supreme from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin." It would be difficult to pack in one paragraph more mischievous half-truths than Lord Dufferin had done. But it gives one an idea of the kind of propaganda he had started by "putting himself in communication with all the principal persons of influence in different parts of India representing the educated section of the [Muslim] community," and then he complacently reports that "the Mahomadans have also certainly been brought much more into sympathy with the Government than they were before." Clever and insidious attempts were made to cultivate among the Muslims class hostility against the Congress, and Sir Auckland Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of the N.W. Provinces, argued with Mr. A.O. Hume about the Congress provoking a counter-agitation among the Muslims. With him the wish was father to the thought.

But there is no doubt that a kind of counter-agitation had been started among the Mussalmans, and it had its protagonist in one no less than Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a dynamic personality who had the courage of his convictions and the determination to carry them out. Sir Syed was a giant among men. The thoroughness with which he carried out his mission of bringing about an intellectual revolution among the Mussalmans, in face of great odds in the shape of fanatical orthodox opposition against the introduction of Western culture, Western education and Western science among his co-religionists, bore ample fruit. His zeal for the cause led him sometimes to make the most extravagant statements, as, for instance, when he said in one of his letters from London (October 15, 1869) : "Without flattering the English I can truly say that the natives of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers, educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in education, manners, and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty animal is to an able and handsome man. The English have reason for believing us in India to be imbecile brutes." Evidently the glamour of Western amenities, and freedom and the education of English women had dazzled him. "What I have seen and seen daily is utterly beyond the imagination of a native of India," he wrote. "The fatal shroud of complacent self-esteem is

wrapt around the Mahomedan community. They remember the old tales of their ancestors, and think that there are none like themselves. The Mahomedans of Egypt and Turkey are daily becoming more civilized. Until the education of the masses is pushed on as it is here, it is impossible for a native to become civilized and honoured. Those who are bent on improving and bettering India must remember that the only way of compassing this is by having the whole of arts and science translated into their own language." With this object in view he went about from place to place in North India harping passionately on the theme of Western education, until he succeeded in founding at Aligarh the M.A.O. College in 1880, which later developed into a university. He imported professors from England and did all in his power to give the *alumini* of the College a Western bent.

But whereas he brought about this wholesome revolution among the Muslims, he also assiduously cultivated in them a loyal bent. "Loyalty to British rule was with him synonymous," says Sir Valentine Chirol, "with loyalty to all the high ideals which he himself pursued and set before his students... So great and enduring was the hold of Sir Syed Ahmad's teachings upon the progressive elements in Mahomedan India that the All India Muslim League was founded in 1905 almost avowedly in opposition to the subversive activities which the Indian National Congress was beginning to develop." Indeed, in a letter that he wrote to Major-General Graham in December 1888, he said he had "undertaken a heavy task against the so-called National Congress, and formed an Association, the 'Indian United Patriotic Association,' the work of which is greater than the other works." This association had as its members Rajas, Maharajas, Zamindars, and these promoted memorials to the Government to the effect that the Association was opposed to the political object and activities of the Congress. At the same time as the Congress was held in Calcutta he organised and held a session of the Muslim Educational Conference at a different place in order to wean the Mussalmans away from the Congress. Opposition to the Congress and support of British rule became the slogan of what has since been known as the Aligarh school of thought. Sir Syed did not perhaps despite the Congress as a Hindu organization, but he had apprehensions that if the Muslims had anything to do with the Congress politics his whole lifework would be ruined. The British

found the followers of the Aligarh school of thought fit instruments for promotion of their policy of Divide and Rule, so much so that Lord Minto was in a position to take the active step of having a "command performance" (to use Maulana Mahomed Ali's words) in the shape of a deputation headed by His Highness the Aga Khan to wait upon him to press the demand of communal representation. It was in the spirit of opposition to the "subversive activities" of the Congress, records Sir Valentine Chirol, "that the influential deputation headed by the Aga Khan. . .waited on Lord Minto to press upon tbe Government of India the Mahomedan view of the political situation created by the Partition of Bengal, lest political concessions should be hastily made to the Hindus which would pace the way for the ascendancy of a Hindu majority equally dangerous to the stability of British rule and to the interests of the Mahomedan minority whose loyalty was beyond dispute. It was again in the same spirit, and fortified by the promise which Lord Minto had on that occasion given them, that they insisted, and insisted successfully, on the principle of community representation being applied for their benefit in the Indian Councils Act of 1909." The Maulana Mahomed Ali was not far wrong in describing this as a "'command performance" is droved by the following words of Lord Morley in a letter to Lord Minto : "I won't follow you again into our Mahomedan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was *your* early speech about their extra claims that first started the M. [Muslim] hare." Apart from Lord Morley's indirect testimony there is some direct testimony too in this connection. I owe it to the Maulana himself. The deputation, as well as the idea of demanding separate representation, had not its birth in Aligarh. It was born in Simla. Mr. Archbold was the principal of M.A.O. College, Aligarh, at that time. This gentleman was the connecting link between Simla and Aligarh. He went to Simla, waited on Lord Minto, and on return he prepared Nawab Mohsin-Ul-Mulk, Honorary Secretary of the College for taking the deputation. H.H. the Aga Khan had just left India for England. Before he had reached Aden, Nawab Mohsin-Ul-Mulk wired him to come back, in order that he might lead the proposed deputation to the Viceroy. He immediately returned to Bombay. We can read the whole story now in the writings of Mr. Archbold himself. Lord Morley had read only Lord Minto's speech. But perhaps he did not know what was

actually going on behind the curtain in India.

It was in this atmosphere that young Abul Kalam Azad found himself on his return from Egypt.

His father, as we have seen, had bitter memories of the Rebellion of 1857, and must have talked to the son about those days when revenge had lost all sense of proportion and treated friend and foe alike with the same brutal severity. The father, as a result, had turned foe to everything Western. Not so the son. He had no doubt that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had done a great service to the Muslim community by impressing on it the necessity of getting out of the narrow grooves of orthodox learning and theology and of profiting by Western education and sciences. But he also felt—what few Muslims felt in those days—that Sir Syed Ahmad had unconsciously made himself a tool of British Imperialism by stopping the Muslims from all political activities and by opposing the Congress. On the one hand he had hindered the political generation of the whole country, and on the other he had, directed the footsteps of the Mussalmans along ways that fostered in them a slavish mentality instead of self-respect, high-mindedness and breadth of political outlook.

In 1908, when the Maulana was only twenty, his mind began to undergo rapid changes. One of these big changes was due to the political state of affairs in India. His Homeland was Bengal, which was then seething with discontent and full of a new political awakening. He noticed that India was presenting to the world two kinds of contradictory pictures at one and the same time. On the one hand were the Hindus, whose minds were fired with a new patriotism and dreaming dreams of freedom, and no repression by Government could stifle them. They were unflinchingingly sacrificing their youthful lives on the alter of patriotism. On the other hand were the Muslims, who had set their face against all political struggle and had become willing tools in the hands of Government determined to crush the national movement. When Young India was marching ahead under the banner of freedom from the British bondage, the slogan of the Muslims was loyalty to Government. This contrast applied young Abul Kalam. He could not tolerate seeing his co-religionists play this sorry part. He made up his mind to work a revolution among them, in whatever way it was possible. How was such a revolution to be brought about ? He pondered over the problem for several years.

Two things came upon him with all the force of a growing conviction. In order to bring about this revolution, the first thing was to create a spirit of rebellion against the policy of the Aligarh school and the second thing was to uproot from the Muslim mind the loyalty to British rule that had been sedulously fostered by the so-called British friends of Muslims.

So after a brief period of preparation he announced the publication of *Al Hilal* (*The Crescent*), a weekly to serve the Muslim world. The first issue was published on the Ist of June, 1912. He was only twenty-four then, but he had already been accepted as a "Maulana" (*lit.* our leader) by the Muslim world. Maulana Mahomed Ali wrote thus in his weekly *Comrade* welcoming the *Al Hilal*; "We can well understand the enormous labour and expense that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, its talented editor, must have gone through before launching this weekly journal. It strikes a new line in journalism by including pictorial illustrations as a permanent feature in its columns. The adoption of the Turkish type, though not exactly an innovation, is a welcome departure from the obsolete methods which inspite of their clumsiness and tedium still retain a paralysing hold on the Urdu Press of the country. Literary and scientific discussions and Muslim educational affairs will have a permanent space assigned to them, besides the regular presentment of the state of affairs in Turkey, Persia, Morocco and the Islamic world in general." This note of welcome does not, indeed, make any mention of the policy of this journal. But the reason is obvious. The policy of the *Comrade* then followed the lines of the Aligarh school of thought, and anyone who started with the ambition of checking the prevailing current could not expect to find favour with it. But reckless of consequences and even at the risk of estranging some of his countrymen, the young Maulana started on his journalistic venture and from the very second week defined its objective. I am sorry that I have not been able to secure the old files of this journal, by I am told by the Maulana that the very first issues acted like explosive in the Muslim world and compelled them to consider seriously whether there was not something radically wrong in their way of thinking. Sir Syed Ahmed fought a successful crusade against the forces of bigotry and darkness. The young Maulana decided to launch a crusade against the forces of political reaction and narrow communalism.

Soon after the Educational Conference held in Dacca in order to wean the Mussalmans away from the Congress, steps were taken to form the Muslim League with the deliberate object of promoting loyalty to the British Government and of fighting for the interests of the Muslims which were supposed to be jeopardized by the politically conscious Hindus. In this very first speech, I am told, Nawab Mushtaq Hussain, Secretary of the Aligarh College, who played a prominent part in organizing the Muslim League, declared that the sword of Islam would be always ready in the service of the British Raj. The Maulana swore opposition to this policy from the very start.

VI

INTERNMENT

The *Al Hilal* made its influence felt within a few weeks of its birth. Within six months its circulation had reached the figure of eleven thousand—a considerable figure if we remember that the annual subscription was Rs. 12 and the bulk of its readers were Mussalmans. The flutter that it had succeeded in creating in the loyal and reactionary dovecots may be measured by the fact that Sahebzada Aftab Ahmed Khan and others started an agitation against it and they partially succeeded in affecting its circulation in Calcutta, obviously because there were few in Bengal who could follow its classical Urdu. But its influence in the United Provinces steadily increased, and such was its popularity that study circles were formed where scores of people assembled together to hear the paper read out to them.

The *Al Hilal* not only made no secret of its political objective, but took a bold line in matters social and religious. There were riots in Ajodhya in 1913 arising out of the usual dispute over cow-slaughter, and the Maulana boldly told the Mussalmans that their insistence on the right of cow-slaughter was far from conducive to communal peace. His view was so strange in those days that even his intimate friend Hakim Ajmal Khan fell foul of him and carried on a bitter controversy with him. It was only in 1920 that the good Hakim Saheb saw his error, confessed it to the Maulana, and became a whole-hogger in the matter like the Maulana himself. Maulana Mahomed Ali too was one of his

strong opponents and critics. The influence of the paper was felt not only in India but abroad, and later European events so conspired that even its bitterest critics were convinced of the wisdom of the line taken up by the Maulana. Sir Valentine Chirol has in his own way summed up the situation rather tersely, and it may be appropriate to quote his own words :

> "A new generation of young Mahomedans had nevertheless been growing up who knew not Seyyid Ahmad and regarded his teachings as obsolete. The lessons which they had learnt from their Western education were not his. They were much more nearly those that the more ardent spirits among the Hindus had imbibed, and they were ready to share with them the new creed of Indian Nationalism on its most extreme form. Other circumstances were tending to weaken the faith of the Mahomedan community in the goodwill, not only of the Government of India, but of the British Government. Even the most conservative Mahomedans were disappointed and irritated by the revision of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 when the predominantly Mahomedan Provinces of Eastern Bengal, created under Lord Curzon, was merged once more into a largely Hindu Bengal. The more advanced Mahomedans had been stirred by the revolutionary upheaval in Constantinople to seek contact with the Turkish Nationalist leaders who now ruled the one great Mahomedan Power in the world, and they learnt from them to read into British foreign policy a purpose of deliberate hostility to Islam itself inspired by dread of the renewed vitality it might derive from the returning consciousness in many Mahomedan countries of their own independent nationhood. In that light they see in the British occupation of Egypt, in the Anglo-French agreement with regard to Morocco, and the Anglo-Russian agreement with regard to Persia, and last but not least, in the Italian invasion of Tripoli, the gradual development of a scheme in which all the powers of Christendom were involved for the extinction of the temporal power of Islam and, with it inevitably, according to the orthodox doctrine of its spiritual authority. The Ottoman Empire had been saved for a time by the protection extended to it for her own purposes by Germany who had alone stood between it and the disintegrating

machinations of the 'European Concert' in Constantinople, best on undermining the ascendancy of the ruling Mahomedan race by its menacing insistence on reforms for the benefit of the subject Christian races which could result only in the further aggrandisement of the independent Christian states already carved out of the Sultan's former dominions in Europe and in the introduction of similar processes even into their Asiatic dominions. The Balkan wars of 1912-13 appeared to bear out the theory of a great European conspiracy directed against Turkey as "the sword of Islam," and whilst the sympathies of Indian Mahomedans of all classes and schools of thought were naturally enlisted in favour of their Turkish co-religionists, the leaders of the advanced Mahomedan party themselves went to Constantinople in charge of the Red Crescent funds collected in India and got into close personal touch with the Turkish Nationalists who ruled in the name of the Sultan but derived their authority from the 'Committee of Union and Progress.' The same party had in the meantime gone a long way towards capturing the All India Moslem League and bringing it into line with the advanced wing of the Indian National Congress."

The London Branch of the Muslim League appealed to the Mussalmans to cast in their lot with the Hindus, and men like Wilfrid Blunt advised Muslim friends to abandon the narrow communalist policy and to identify themselves with the political objective of the Indian National Congress. With the Maulana, however, it was not so much the foreign situation that weighed as the situation in India. For him the *Mantram* of "loyalty" went against the grain and he had throughout set his face against it on the broad political ground. But though events were thus conspiring for a radical change in the Muslim outlook, men like Maulana Mahomed Ali were stoutly opposed to Muslims identifying themselves with the Congress in a common political objective. His attitude may be judged from his severe strictures on the appeal of the London Branch of the Muslim League : "Soft-headed and some self-advertising folk have gone about proclaiming that the Mussalmans should join the Congress because the Government had revoked the Partition of Bengal or because Persia and Turkey are in trouble. We are simply amused at this irresponsible fatuity.

But when a responsible body like the London Branch of the All India Muslim League talks of close co-operation between Hindus and Muslims because the Mussalmans of Tripoli and Persia have been the victims of European aggression, war realize for the first time that even same and level-headed men can run off at a tangent and confuse the issues. What has the Moslem situation abroad to do with the condition of the Indian Mussalmans ? Either their interests come actually into conflict with those of the Hindus, or they have been all along guilty of a great political meanness and hypocrisy, Has the Indian situation undergone a change ?"

The Indian situation had undergone no change, it was really the narrow outlook of the Indian Mussalmans that needed to undergo a change. Even from the inception of the Indian National Congress there were not men wanting among the Mussalmans, men of light and leading like Mr. Justice Budroodeen Tyabji and Mr. Rahimatoola Sayani who, for good or ill, had decided to identify themselves with the Congress. Sheikh Raza Hussain had produced a *fatwa* (injunction) from the leader of the Sunni Mussalmans in Lucknow in support of the Congress and had declared that "it is not the Muslims but their official masters who are opposed to the Congress."

But now came a voice that made itself felt in the Muslim world. Scarcely had six months elapsed since the publication of *Al Hilal* when all educated Mussalmans were awakened to a new political sense. The leadership of the Aligarh School, which had hindered the political progress of the Mussalmans, and whose main plan had been unswerving loyalty to British rule, found itself quite helpless in the face of this new political awakening. Syed Wazir Hassan (later Justice Sir Wazir Hassan) was then the secretary of the Muslim League. In the beginning he had opposed *Al Hilal*, but when he saw the new awakening, he also consented to a change in the political creed of the League according to the needs of the day. He toured India specially with this object in view, and went to Calcutta and had long talks with the Maulana. And when in April 1913 the annual session of the All India Muslim League was held in Lucknow, the constitution of the League was amended and the creed of the League became "the attainment of *suitable* Self-Government for India" instead of "loyalty of British Government, and the attainment of the rights of the Mussalmans." The League for the first time came to have a political objective,

The Maulana did not want the word "suitable." He had emphasized the point that there should be no place for a declaration of loyalty in the constitution of the League. But the late Maulana Mahomed Ali opposed the Maulana. His words emphasizing the duty of loyalty quite strange today : "For becoming a Muslim it is enough for one to recite the *Kalemah* (affirmation of the faith) but once. Yet a pious Muslim does not stop there. He repeats the *Kalemah* daily. Nay, he remembers it on every occasion. Similarly, although we are loyal subjects of British Government, we should not be content with merely being loyal, we should affirm our loyalty every now and then, and in every activity of life."

The events in the West, too, had their share in creating the change that was rapidly coming over the Indian Muslim world. On the top of the events mentioned in the quotation from Sir Valentine Chirol came the World War, and events happened that shook even men like Maulana Mahomed Ali, who even whilst the war was on had declared : "Even if self-government were to be conceded to us, we would humbly tell Government this is no time for it, and we must for the present decline such concessions with thanks. Goncessions are asked for and accepted in peace. We are not Russian Poles. We need no bribes !"

It is now well known that it was the very article in which he has made this declaration of loyalty that cost him the security and the consequent closing down of his paper and brought about his internment along with that of his brother. The Maulana's paper *Al Hilal* had during the war achieved a circulation of twenty-five thousand copies and it was being read in all parts of India. Its growing influence may be measured by two incidents which may be noted here. A member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Philby, while serving the Multan, was appointed specially to report on it to the Punjab Government. He happened to go to Calcutta as Secretary of the Board of Examiners for the Civil Service officers. He was so struck with the style of the *Al Hilal* that he sought an interview with the Maulana in order to pay his respects to him and to congratulate him on the masterly way in which it was being edited. It was due to his contact with the Maulana that he took up the study of Arabic and after going to Mesopotamia wrote the *Heart of Arabia.*

The Maulana's old connection with the revolutionary party in

Bengal had already attracted the attention of the Criminal Intelligence Department, and Sir Charles Cleveland, its head, had always been on the lookout for material calculated to implicate him. As early as November 1914 the Maulana knew that the fate of his paper and along with it his own was hanging in the balance. For at the instance of Sir James Meston, Governor of the United Provinces, the *Pioneer* of Allahabad had published in November an editorial entitled "Pro-Germanism in Calcutta" in which it charged the Maulana with pro-German tendencies. It is a long article and throws a flood of light on the close attention with which the paper was being watched. This is how the paper is introduced to the reader :

> "*Al Hilal* is a weekly illustrated newspaper published in the Urdu language in Calcutta, and is edited by a Delhi Mussalman named Abul Kalam. It has a large circulation among Mussalmans in these provinces, and probably in other parts of India. Ever since the war broke out, its attitude has been so strikingly pro-German that it must be a matter of amazement to all who read the paper that the Government has managed to tolerate its writings. Possibly this may be accounted for by the fact that the paper attracts little or no attention in Calcutta itself owing to its being published in Urdu, and there can be little doubt that this was one of the main causes which led the editor to choose Calcutta as the place of publication. Another reason may be that the style of the most mischievous articles is very allusive and full of veiled sneers and sarcasms and innuendoes, most of which either disappear or lose their effect when translated into English, and it is not likely that many European officials read the paper in the original."

Then follow quotations from various articles, only one or two of which may here be given :

> "In the history of the present War the forts of Antwerp have gained such historical distinction that military science has not abandoned them like their unlucky destiny, and apparenly up to the present no defect or crudity has been discovered in their fortifications as in the case of Liege and Namur. They have

been vanquished, but the realities of their strength and protectiveness remain infact, and instead of singing interminably about their faults and defects, a confession of the strength of the assailants has been made, and kind attention has for the first time been paid to truth and reality. Praise be to God that some of the critical faculty formerly lavished on finding out defects of the unfortunate defeated forts has been partly employed in disclosing the strange and wonderful artillery of the Germans, and it has been ascertained that all these marvellous results are due not to Germany but to its fortshattering guns, which are 37 centimetres in diameter and hurl projectiles thirty maunds in weight. (Here follows a Persian quotation, 'We expected naught like this from this weak blade of grass.' It has been announced that British aid was sent to Antwerp, which went and enabled the despairing inhabitants to pass two nights in hope and joy. Their arrival was greeted with enthusiasm and praise and thanks were chanted in the churches. Yet this precious aid conferred no benefit on luckless Belgium, and owing to various adverse accidents British bravery did not get an opportunity of displaying those military excellences and martial superiorities which it had often shown in the plains of France. Still with great wisdom they managed to save a large part of themselves from destruction and arrived along with the fugitives from Antwerp and Ostend. . . .

"Now the real facts are clear as daylight, viz., that the information which the whole world possessed for years as to the astonishing powers and appliances of Germany is as correct now as it was before the War began. Germany is in possession of the whole of Belgium and has advanced as far as Paris. It is fighting with the Russians in Russia, and has advanced miles within its boundaries. Its African colonies have not yet been completely conquered and even the famous naval force of Japan has been unable to take Kiao Chau in two months. On the other side, not an inch of German territory has passed into the occupation of their enemies. The result is that the countries of the opponents of Germany have been turned upside down by the War, as is the case in Belgium and France and part of Russia, but in Germany itself there is no fighting, and thus its internal tranquillity

and security and its home trade and economic condition is (*sic*) just exactly as it was before. They are using their factories for turning out military supplies, they are forging guns and a hundred submarines are being got ready at one time. From this contrast, the present results of the War are plainly apparent. By capturing Antwerp and Ostend the position of Germany in the War has become very powerful and weighty, and the power opposed to it on the other side of the sea has had its road closed. Apparently half the task of Germany has been completed. It is free from anxiety in the direction of Belgium and the sea coast, and it will begin its advance afresh. It has placed mines in the river Scheldt, and will now wish to extend its influence especially over the English Channel."

The comment of the *Pioneer* on these and other extracts may be summed up in two sentences :

"The obvious intention of the writer of these lines is to make his co-religionists believe that Germany is invincible and that the power of the British Empire can do nothing to resist its attacks. . . . We may safely say that a Government which at such a time as the present allows a British subject to publish unchecked malicious insinuations against British soldiers and sailors at any rate may lay claim to the possession of a most un-Germanic spirit of toleration."

Whatever may be the facts, it is obvious that the Maulana wielded a powerful pen and his articles were packed with information not usually to be found even in English journals. Besides, he had the courage to tell unpalatable things about the Allies, without regard to consequences. That what he said and wrote was not quite so abominable as the *Pioneer* thought may be judged from the fact that the Government showed their "un-Germanic spirit of toleration" for over eighteen months after this article was published. Steps were taken to forfeit the security of the paper, and orders were then passed against the editor prohibiting him from entering the Punjab, the United Provinces, and Madras, and on April 7, 1915, the Bengal Government expelled him from his province. He repaired to Ranchi for reasons of health, where the

Government of India interned him until the beginning of the year 1920.

Even during the internment he would go to the mosque and deliver there the Friday sermon. He was allowed to have books, and it was there that he wrote *Tazkira*, a volume of personal reminiscences. It is a masterpiece of elusive style that holds the reader until he gets to the end of the book, and yet I am told very few pages are devoted to giving any facts of his own life. Part of his great commentary on the Quran was also written there, but of this more in a later chapter.

VII

THE FLOOD

The history of the three years 1919 to 1921 has been told by many writers, and by none so vividly and in such a superb style as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Autobiography*.* I will not attempt to re-tell the moving story. They were days to which every Indian who has had a share, however humble of insignificant, in the struggle for his country's freedom looks back with pride and exultation. And everyone has his own story to tell. It would be easy to fill a volume with these stories, which however similar would not fall upon the reader, for men and women, young and old, and even little children played their parts in the epic drama, each in their own way.

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven.

I shall only touch upon the story of those years to the extent that it concerns the Maulana. When he was released from his internment in 1920 he beheld a spectacle for which he was hardly prepared. The Rowlatt Act had found Gandhiji shaking himself free of almost a year's illness and hurling defiance against the proudest imperialist power in the world. At his call the crushed, withered, smothered and even dead humanity in cities and towns and villages had come to life. The non-violent nature of the struggle afforded scope even to the ignorant and the illiterate, to

*London, John Lane, The Bodley Head.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad now came upon the field, with his vast learning, his matchless powers of eloquence and persuasion and his modern outlook, not vouchsafed to the divines who were equally learned but who had not looked outside their learning. He had been released from internment in the nick of time. More than any other Muslim leader, though he was the youngest of them all, he was a tower of strength to Gandhiji. Non-co-operation was a navel weapon, and combined with non-violence it must have struck them as a most difficult one to wield. I requested the Maulana to furnish the details of those preliminary discussions among Muslim leaders which finally led to their acceptance of non-co-operation, and I am indebted to his vivid memory for these details :

"I happened to meet Gandhiji for the first time in Delhi on January 18. 1920. All Hindu and Muslim leaders had assembled there in order to wait in deputation upon the Viceroy and place before Government the sentiments of the Indian Muslims with regard to Turkey. Lokamanya Tilak, too, was in Delhi. As a member of the deputation I had already put my signature on the memorial to be submitted to the Viceroy. But I could not bring myself to consent to go to Government House. The late Maulana Mahomed Ali and other friends were insistent that I should join the deputation, but my feeling was that the deputation could not serve any useful purpose.

"The deputation did wait on the Viceroy, however, and as was but to be expected with little result. The only assurance that the Viceroy gave was that if it was decided to send the deputation to London the Government of India would provide all the facilities. It was thereupon decided that the late Maulana Mahomed Ali should lead the deputation. He was ready to go. But another question now arose : whether the Mussalmans should be content merely with sending this deputation or whether there was anything more to be done. I was of opinion that these old methods of begging, petitioning, waiting in deputation and so on could not be of much avail. We had to try to find some means of exerting direct pressure. But most people fought shy of this line of thinking. They had no constructive suggestion to offer, but were ready to pick

holes if anything concrete was proposed.

"The matter was discussed for six long hours in the late Hakim Ajmal Khan's drawing-room, but without any result. Gandhiji thereupon proposed that a sub-committee of two or three people should be appointed to decide the matter in consultation with him. Their decision would then be placed before the bigger committee. Hakim Saheb and I were selected to form this sub-committee. We accompanied Gandhiji to the late Principal Rudra's house and were closeted with him for three hours. It was here that non-co-operation was conceived. Gandhiji placed before us a detailed programme, and I had no difficulty in agreeing with him in every detail. It was a quite clear to me that there was no other effective or correct line of action than this.

"The next day the members of the deputation met again, and Gandhiji explained to them his proposal. There was still hesitancy on their part. The late Maulanas Abdul Bari, Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali could not yet make up their minds and wanted time. The late Hakim Saheb, however, gave me his full support. About this time the Khilafat conference was being held in Meerut, so Gandhiji and I proceeded from Delhi to Meerut, and the non-co-operation programme was placed before the public for the first time at this conference. The second Khilafat conference was thereafter held towards the end of February in Calcutta under my presidentship, and I recommended in my presidential address the same programme for the acceptance of the Muslims."

The atmosphere for the special Congress at Calcutta and the Annual Congress at Nagpur was thus prepared, and the resolution on the various items of non-co-operation—boycott of councils, schools and law courts—was carried by an overwhelming majority.

The rest of the story is soon told. There were meetings all over the country attended by hundreds of thousands of men and women, and addressed by Gandhiji and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in one province by the Ali brothers, in another by Deshabandhu Das and Pandits Motilal and Jawaharlal. Phenomenal was the response. Gandhiji worked according to time-table. A crore of rupees (nearly a million pounds) were collected on the

final date announced for the collection. Boys and girls emptied schools and colleges, and numerous lawyers gave up their practice, many of them of life. Both the great Pandits, Deshabandhu Das, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Rajagopalachar were among the distinguished lawyers who renounced their incomes of thousands of rupees per month and dedicated themselves for the service of the country. Women flocked to the meetings in their thousands and poured their wealth and precious ornaments and jewellery into Gandhiji's begging bowl.

The Maulana's matchless eloquence held audiences spellbound. He was as much in demand at ordinary meetings as well as at extraordinary meetings of Muslim divines. In a special conference of the divines at Lahore, attended by over a thousand divines from all the important places in the country, they resolved to appoint Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the Imam—supreme spiritual head—for all India. There could not have been a greater honour for a Muslim divine or a more attractive offer for one coveting positions of power. But the Maulana respectfully declined. The divines—even the most orthodox ones of Deoband and Lucknow pressed him to accept the honour, knowing that he held radical views. But soon he was arrested, as we shall see in the next chapter. On release in 1923 he was again pressed, but he explained to the executive committee of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema that the appointment of anyone, however exalted, as the spiritual head was fraught with danger and might prove an obstacle in the progress of the Muslim community, and therefore, he begged them not to press him. It was a great piece of renunciation and established his reputation with the divines more firmly than ever before.

VII

A DECLARATION OF FAITH

The closing weeks of the year 1921 were full of feverish activity for Government. During the whole year there had been sufficient defiance of law and authority, and this reached its climax when the Ali brothers with a few others were arrested for sedition and tampering with the loyalty of the sepoys. The arrest of one of the brothers, Maulana Mahomed Ali, took place while he was

touring with Gandhiji and as both were actually going to address a public meeting. Gandhiji did not then know why Maulana Mahomed Ali was arrested. But his immediate protest rang throughout the country : "In imprisoning Maulana Mahomed Ali, the Government have imprisoned the Khilafat, for the two brothers are the truest representatives of the Khilafat. . . . Let us imitate the courage, the faith, the fearlessness, the truthfulness and the vigilant incessant activity of the brothers." In a day or two came the communique issued by the Governor of Bombay stating the reasons why Maulana Mahomed Ali, his brother and five others had been arrested. They were to be prosecuted for having been responsible at a Karachi conference for having passed a resolution which amounted to tampering with the loyalty of the sepoy, and the Governor declared that the Government were no longer going to put up with such a thing and meant business. This was a signal for another challenge from the public. Gandhiji expressed the challenge in words that could not be mistaken. The Governor of Bombay, he declared, "evidently does not know that the National Congress began to tamper with the loyalty of the sepoy in September last year, that the Central Khilafat Committee began it earlier, and that I began it earlier still, for I must be permitted to take the credit or the odium of suggesting that India had a right openly to tell the sepoy and everyone who served the Government in any capacity whatsoever that he participated in the wrongs done by the Government. The Conference at Karachi merely repeated the Congress declaration in terms of Islam. . . . How can anyone having a spark of humanity in him and any Mussalman having any pride in his religion fell otherwise than the Ali brothers have done ? . . . . His Excellency's reference to the sedition of the Ali brothers is only less unpardonable than his reference to the tampering. For he must know that sedition has become the creed of the Congress. Every non-co-operator is pledged to preach disaffection towards the Government established by law." This declaration resulted in a manifesto, signed by all the important leaders in the country, defying Government to do their worst. It declared : "We, the undersigned, speaking in our individual capacity, desire to state that it is the inherent right of everyone to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to, or remaining in the employ of the Government, whether in the civil or the

military department. We, the undersigned, state is as our opinion that it is contrary to national dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier, under a system of government which has brought about India's economic, moral and political degradation and which has used the soldiery and the police for repressing national aspirations, as for instance at the time of the Rowlatt Act agitation, and which has used the soldiers for crushing the liberty of the Arabs, the Turks and other nations who have done no harm to India. We are also of opinion that it is the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood." The very second signature to this manifesto, after Gandhiji's was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's. This was followed by a repetition of this manifesto by hundreds of persons from countless platforms. But, strange to say, no action was taken by Government on this. I have an impression that Government were stunned and quite unprepared for this country-wide conflagration.

But soon after came the Prince of Wales's visit, and the Congress decision to boycott all functions in connection therewith. There was no insult intended to the Prince as a man, but there was a resolute decision to boycott the visit, as it was obviously being exploited for advertising the "benign" British rule in India. There was no meaning in spending millions of rupees on receiving the Prince of Wales and in arranging for a pleasure trip and sport for him, when the country was seething with discontent and when millions were in a chronic state of starvation. It was an outrage and a crime, and the Congress proclaimed a boycott to be carried out in as thorough a manner as possible. For this purpose volunteers began to be enrolled in every province. The Government answered by issuing notifications in Bengal, the Punjab and the United Provinces declaring these volunteer organizations illegal and enlisting of volunteers an offence. This challenge was taken up everywhere by open defiance of the notification. Not only were volunteers enlisted, but their names were published in newspapers from day-to-day. The names of Pandits Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru, were at the head of the list in the United Provinces, and those of Deshabandhu C.R. Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at that of the list in Bengal. The Deshabandhu made a clarion call to his countrymen : "I feel the handcuffs on my wrists and the weight of iron chains on my body. It is the agony

of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left ? What matters it whether I am dead or alive" ? The whole country was, as it were, electrified, and though Bombay disgraced itself by ugly disturbances the other crities carried out a peaceful boycott. Allahabad and Calcutta presented a sepulchral appearance, and wherever the Prince went there were none but a handful of Government employees to greet him.

An orgy of arrests followed everywhere. The highest in the land were arrested and sent to prison. The Nehrus in the United Provinces, Lala Lajpatrai in the Punjab, Deshabandhu Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in Calcutta, and thousands of the rank and file proudly found themselves behind prison bars. Between December and January not less than thirty thousand people were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Their refusal to defend themselves and their ringing statements in courts made a mockery of British Indian courts and of British justice.

Deshabandhu Das was to have presided over that year's session of the Congress, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad over the session of the Muslim League. Both were prisoners before they could go to discharge their duties as presidents. Their joy knew no bounds. Mrs. Das wrote a long letter to Gandhiji expressing her joy over her husband's arrest, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad left before going to prison a letter to Gandhiji in which he said : "You are every day running short of human aid as your colleagues are being everywhere arrested, but divine aid is on the other hand increasing. The recent disturbances in Bombay had caused you great pain. and I felt much aggrieved to see you so unhappy and restless on that account. But Calcutta is now aroused in order to present to you the pleasant fruits of success in place of your sorrowful feelings of the past." The trial of both Deshabandhu C.R. Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was, on some pretext or other, allowed to drag on for over three months. The Maulana was awarded a year's imprisonment, and he regretted that he had been let off with such a light sentence. But before his conviction he made before the court a statement which was unique among all the statements made by Satyagrahi prisoners. It was naturally in the Maulana's polished Urdu, and the English translation, which could not really bring out the beauty of the original, covered over

thirty closely typed foolscap sheets. Gandhiji hailed it "as an eloquent thesis giving the Maulana's views on Khilafat and Nationalism," and "an oration deserving penal servitude for life." He also said that it constituted good political education. Though the Maulana has had no English education at school or college, as we have seen before, he had educated himself at home. The statement reveals the wealth of his historical knowledge, his incisive argument, and his determination to suffer for the motherland. Twenty years have not staled the freshness of this utterance, and a few extracts from it will not be out of place.

Here is a passage in which he proudly claims to belongs to the long line of Satyagrahis from Jesus and Socrates downwards who suffered for adherence to truth :

> "The iniquities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriages of justice. In that list we observe a holy personage like Jesus, who had to stand in his time before a foreign court aud be convicted even as the worst of criminals. We see also in the same list Socrates, who was sentenced to be poisoned for no other crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of that great Florentine martyr to truth, the inventor Galileo, who refused to belie his observations and researches merely because their avowal was a crime in the eyes of constituted authority. . . . When I ponder on the great and significant history of the convicts' dock and find that the honour of standing in that place belongs to me today, my soul becomes steeped in thankfulness and praise of God."

Then he defines dispassionately the duty of breeding holy discontent :

> "The bureaucracy in India is nothing more nor less than the domination which powerful individuals will always normally attain over a nation decaying by its own neglect and internal weaknesses. In the natural course of things such dominant authority cannot possibly countenance any nationalistic awakening or agitations for progress, reform or justice. And as such agitation would spell the inevitable downfall of its

dominants power, it seeks to kill all agitation by declaring it a crime against constituted authority. No power would tamely submit to movements likely to bring about its own decline, however much such decline might be in the ultimate interests of justice. This posture of affairs is merely a struggle for existence in which both sides fight desperately for their principles. An awakened nation aspires to attain what it considers its birth-right, and the dominant authority would fain not budge an inch from its position of unquestioned way. The contention might be advanced that the latter party even like its opponents is not open to any blame inasmuch as it is merely putting up a fight for its own survival, and it is quite an incidental matter that its existence happens to be inimical to perpetuation of justice. We cannot deny facts of human nature and its inseparable characteristics. Like good, evil also desires to live in this world and struggle for its own existence. In India also such a struggle for the survival of the fittest has already commenced. Most certainly, therefore, nothing can be a higher crime against the domination of Government, as at present established, than the agitation which seeks to terminate its unlimited authority in the name of liberty and justice. I fully admit that I am not only guilty of such agitation, but that I belong to that band of pioneers who originally sowed the seed of such agitation in the heart of our nation and dedicated their whole lives to the cherishing and breeding of this holy discontent."

Next he describes the evil of domination over a nation by a foreign Power :

"It is my belief that liberty is the natural and God-given right of man. No man and no bureaucracy consisting of men has got the right to make the servants of God its own slaves. However attractive be the euphemisms invented for 'subjugation' and 'slavery,' still slavery is slavery, and it is opposed to the will and the canons of God. I therefore consider it a bounden duty to liberate my country from its yoke. The notorious fallacies of 'reform' and 'gradual transference of power' can produce no illusions and pitfalls in my unequivocal and definite faith. Liberty being the primary right of man,

it is nobody's personal privilege to prescribe limits or apportion shares in the distribution of it. To say that a nation should get its liberty in graduated stages is the same as saying that an owner should by right receive his property only in bits and creditor his dues by instalments. . . . Whatever philanthropic acts might be performed by a man who has usurped our property, his usurpation would still continue to be utterly illegal.

"Evil cannot be classified into good and bad. All that is in fairness possible is to differentiate the varying degree. For instance, we can say very heinous robbery and less heinous robbery, but who can speak of good robbery and bad robbery ? I cannot, therefore, at all conceive of any justification for such domination because by its very nature it is an act of iniquity."

Then follows the meaning of the Khilafat and a declaration of the duty of all Muslims :

"Such is my duty as a man and as an Indian, and religious injunctions have imposed upon me the same duty. In fact, in my view the greatest proof of the truth of my religion is that it is another name for the teaching of the rights of man. I am a Mussalman, and by virtue of being a Mussalman this has become my religious duty. Islam never accepts as valid a sovereignty which is personal or is constituted of a bureaucracy of a handful of paid executives. Islam constitutes a perfected system of freedom and democracy. It has been sent down to get back for the human race the liberty which has been snatched away from it. Monarchs, foreign dominations, selfish religious pontiffs and powerful sections had alike misappropriated this liberty of man. They had been fondly nursing the belief that power and possession spell the highest right. The moment Islam appeared, it proclaimed that the highest right is not might but right itself. No one except God has got the right to make serfs and slaves of God's creatures. All men are equal and their fundamental rights are on a par. He only is greater than others whose deeds are the most righteous of all. . . .

"The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Khalif

was a perfected conception of democratic equality, and it only could take shape with the whole nation's free will, unity, suffrage and election. This is the reason why sovereign or president of a republic is like a designated Khalif; Khilafat literally means nothing more nor less than a representation, so that all the authority a Khalif possesses consists in his representative character, and he possesses no domination beyond this representative authority.

"If then Islam defines it as a duty of Mahomedans to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the nation, it is perfectly superfluous to add what under Islam would be the ruling given about a foreign bureaucracy. If today there was to be established in India an Islamic Government, but if the system of that Government was based upon personal monarchy or upon bureaucratic oligarchy, then to protest against the existence of such a Government would still be my primary duty as a Mussalman. I would still call the Government oppressive and demand its replacement.

"I frankly confess that this original conception of Islamic sovereignty could not be uniformly maintained in its primal purity on account of the selfness and personal domineering of the later Mahomedan sovereigns. The mighty magnificence of the Emperors of Ancient Rome and of the Shahs Persia had attracted the Muslim sovereigns powerfully to the dubious glory of great monarchical empires. They began to prefer the majestic figures of Kaiser or Khosroe to the simple dignity of the original Khalifs clad oftentimes in old tattered cloaks. No period of the dynasties and sovereignties of Islam has however failed to produce some true Muslim martyrs, who have made public declaration of the tyrannies and transgressions of such monarches and joyfully and triumphantly suffered all misries and hardships which inevitably confronted them in the thorny paths of duty.

"The holy Prophet of Islam has preached the following doctrine to the Muslims : 'That man is blessed with the best of deaths who proclaims the truth in the face of a tyrannical administration and is slaughtered in punishment of this dead.' The Scripture of Islam, the Holy Quran, defines the greatest

attribute of the true Muslim to be 'that they fear not any being except God and whatever they consider to be the truth they reck not any authority in the public proclamation of such truth.' The Quran further defines the national characteristic of the Muslims as follows : 'They are the witnesses to truth on God's earth.' As long therefore as they continue to be Muslims they cannot desist from giving this public evidence. In fact, it has designated Muslims as witnesses, i.e., givers of the evidence of truth. When the Prophet of Islam extracted a promise of righteousness from any person, one of the clauses of such a bond used to be, 'I will always proclaim the truth in whatever condition and whatever I may happen to be. . . .'

"An outstanding object-lesson in speaking the truth which national history presents to the Muslims is to be found in the order of an autocratic-monarch by which each organ of a rebellions victim's body was to be cut-off. The charge against the victim was that he had proclaimed the inequity of the tyrant. Firm as a rock he stood and took his punishment in all its heinous stages, but his tongue right on to the moment when it was severed went on proclaiming that that autocrat was a tyrant. This is an incident of the reign of the Emperor Abdul Malik, whose domain extended from Syria to Sind. Can anyone then attach any weight to a sentence under Section 124-A as compared to this terrible penalty ? I confess that it is the mortal decadence of Muslims and their renouncing the real Islamic life that is responsible for the bringing about of this fallen state.

"While I am penning these lines I know there is still living in India many a Muslim who through his weakness pays homage to this very tyranny. But the failure of man to act upto the spirit of certain tenet cannot belie the intrinsic truth of those principles.

"The tenets of Islam are preserved in its scriptures. These, under no circumstances, make it permissible for Muslims to enjoy life at the expense of liberty. A true Muslim has either immolate himself or to retain his liberty; no other course is open for him under his religion. Today the Muslims have come to a firm decision that in freeing their country from its slavery they will take their fullest share along with their Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian brethren.

"Continuously in the last twelve years I have been training my community and my country in demanding their rights and their liberty. I was only eighteen years old when I first started speaking and writing on this theme. I have consecrated my whole being to it and sacrificed the best part of my life, meaning the whole of my youth, to my infatuation for this ideal. For four years I have suffered internment, but during my internment even I have never desisted from pushing on my work and inviting people to this national goal. This is the mission of my life, and if I live at all I elect to live only for this single purpose. Even as the Quran says, 'My prayers and my observances and my life and my death are all for my Lord, the God of the Universe.' I am the first pioneer in this latest phase of that Islamic movement in India which has created a tremendous revolution in the political world of the Indian Muslims and has gradually elevated them to that pinnacle of national consciousness on which they are seen today. In 1912 I started an Urdu journal, the *Al Hilal*, which was the organ of this movement and the object of the publication of which was mainly what I have declared above. It is an actual fact that within those three years it had created a new atmosphere in the religious and the political life of the Mussalmans of India. . . .

"In this war of liberty and justice I have adopted the path of non-violent non-co-operation. Opposed to us stands an au authority armed with the complete equipment for oppression, excess and bloodshed. But we place our reliance and trust, next to God, only upon our own limitless power of sacrifice and unshakable fortitude.

"Unlike Mahatma Gandhi my belief is not that armed force should never be opposed by armed force. It is my belief that such opposing of violence with violence is fully in harmony with the natural laws of God in those circumstances under which Islam permits the use of such violence. But at the same time, for purposes of liberation of India and the present agitation, I entirely agree with all the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi and I have complete confidence in his honesty. It is my definite conviction that India cannot attain success by means of arms, nor is it advisable for it to adopt that course. India can only triumph through non-violent agitation, and

India's triumph will be a memorable example of the victory of moral force."

The Maulana's thoughts so clearly expressed in this statement regarding the democratic conception in Islam are of special note and worthy of being contrasted with the statements of some of the present leaders of Muslims who say that democracy is unsuited to the genius of Islam. The Maulana declares that "Islam defines it as a duty of Mahomedans to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the nation." And the statement proclaims also that dedication to the service of the motherland, which was made at the age of eighteen and is still in process of fulfilment.

IX

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

Those indeed were glorious days. Hindus and Muslims had realized that on the sacred field of Jallianwalla, where the blood of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs had mingled to unite them as blood brothers and to baptize them as soldiers of Swaraj, they had been blessed by God by a new message of hope and union. And so when Gandhiji covered the length and breadth of the land, now in company with the Ali brothers, now in company with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, now with some other Muslim leaders, the apathy of the Muslim masses towards politics and political work had vanished; they vied with one another in little acts of service and sacrifice and in wonderful and effusive demonstrations of fraternization. Orthodox Hindus, whose dining-rooms had never been opened before to any but their own kith and kin, accepted with open arms revered Muslim leaders, and they were invited to dine side by side with the Hindu leaders in their own homes. Muslim purdah ladies, who would not go to a public meeting and would certainly never entertain the thought of having a leader of the opposite sex to address them, now met in huge meetings and invited Gandhiji to address them. Quite an unforgettable of those days was Maulana Shaukat Ali and Maulana Mahomed Ali and other Muslim leaders going to these normally

prohibited meetings with bandages on their eyes. Gandhiji, they said, was pure enough to go anywhere. To him all women were as sisters or daughters, and even Muslim ladies would not hesitate to have him in their midst. But the position of others, including their own, was different. They were ordinary erring mortals, and so they should go to these sisters with eyes blindfolded ! The elimax was reached when Muslims everywhere in India refrained not only from eating beef but even from sacrificing cows on the sacred day of Id. "It is our sacred duty to help our Muslim brethren to protect the cow of their Khilafat, without thought of bargain or reward," Gandhiji had declared at public meetings and in many of his writings. "Our cow will be protected automatically. The Muslims may be expected to think of their own duty in the matter." And not only his words went straight home, but leaders were not wanting who not only personally refrained from using beef or sacrificing the cow, but even went out of their way to protect cows in many instances where through ignorance they would have been slaughtered.

Political awakening had reached its high-water mark. The test came when a Round Table Conference met at the instance of Lord Reading to consider proposals of a compromise between the Government and the Congress. The only stumbling-block was the insistence on the release of the Ali brothers and other "Khilafat" prisoners. The Conference had really been offered with a view to tiding over the crisis arising out of the Congress boycott of the visit of the Prince of Wales, and even if all our terms had been accepted there was not much chance of achieving solid results. But Gandhiji and other Hindu leaders were adamant in their demand for the release of the Khilafat prisoners without whom, they said, no compromise proposals would be worth discussing. The result was that Deshabandhu Das and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the thousands of others who went with them to prison had to remain there to serve their full terms of imprisonment.

But with the incarceration of Gandhiji, and the lull in the movement that came not necessarily as a result of but certainly after the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement, demoralization set in. The political leaders were all in jail, and communal leaders who had during the raging campaign stayed aloof now came to the surface. The Government, always ready to make the best of our weaknesses, used some of these as their tools. The

policy of "Divide and Rule" that had received a rude shock during the years 1919-22 again came to the force, and interested parties played on the narrow prejudices of the ignorant. But it was no use blaming the Government. "Divide and Rule," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has said, "has always been the way of empires, and the measure of their success in this policy has been also the measure of their superiority over those whom they thus exploit. We cannot complain of this, or any rate we ought not to be surprised at it. To ignore it and not to provide against it is in itself a mistake in one's thought."

However that may be, the years that followed Gandhiji's incarceration in 1922 saw the success of this policy and events proved that the unity we seemed to have achieved had been anything but substantial. It was certainly not heart unity. The Hindus' attempt to prevent cow sacrifice by force was sufficient to lead to a riot and considerable bloodshed. Their playing music whilst passing in processions in front of a mosque became an occasion for a conflict. And there are mosques in all parts of every town and city, daily prayers go on at five times during the twenty-four hours, and there are also the inevitable noises due to processions and the like. A wholesome spirit of give-and-take, of accommodation and tolerance is all that is needed for preventing these clashes. But something had considered to root out from the mass mind that spirit of brotherliness that seemed to have been fostered during 1919-22. The superficial faith in non-violence was extinguished, and no solution seemed to appeal to them save a resort to force.

In some provinces the cause was economic. A minister insisting on packing his departments with his co-religionists gave rise to distrust and fear in the mind of the other community, and this naturally increased the existing tension. Indigent Muslim tenants and debtors listened to instigation against Hindu landlords and money-lenders, and a economic question became in many places a communal one.

Religious fanatics in each community attacked the other's religion and sought to add to its fold men and women from the other community without the slightest regard to the means employed. The Mussalmans proclaimed their right to carry on *tabligh*; the Hindus replied by proclaiming their right to *shuddhi*. These attempts at conversions brought conflict in their train, and

there were fierce riots. Newspapers and pamphlets became the vehicles of scurrilous propaganda and in not a few cases were the cause of the riots.

This was the atmosphere prepared for the reception of Gandhiji when he was released from prison in January 1924. Hardly a fortnight passed without the news of a riot somewhere. At Multan, Saharanpur, Agra, Ajmer, Palwal and at many another place there were fierce riots with incendiarism, looting and destruction of property and desecration of sacred places.

Some Hindus laid the blame for all this at Gandhiji's door : "You asked the Hindus to make common cause with Mussalmans on the Khilafat question. That resulted in unifying and awakening the Mussalmans, and now that the Khilafat is over the awakened Mussalmans have proclaimed a kind of *Jehad* [holy war] against the Hindus." The Mussalmans said : "We simple-minded people have been unjustly treated. You by your agitation won over Mahomed Ali to your side and you attacked the famous institution of Aligarh built with patient care by Sir Syed Ahmed. Your boycott of councils prevented our able men from going to the councils to the prejudice of the interests of our community". In an historic article on Hindu-Muslim tension Gandhiji analysed the causes and suggested the solution, and declared tha the was entirely unrepentant for what he had done. "Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should still have thrown myself into the Khilafat agitation," he said. "The awakening among the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again." But his article was the occasion of a number of questions and cross-questions, and apparently no one seemed to have profited by it. For within a short whiled desecration of Hindu temples by Mussalmans at Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga took place followed by fierce riots, and on the top of this came the terrible riots at Kohat with wanton destruction of lakhs of rupees' worth of property.

Gandhiji was exasperated. To use his words he was "violently shaken" by the rioting at Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga, and "the news from Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain." On Wednesday, September 18, 1924, he knew the remedy. "I must do penance," he declared, "My penance is the prayer of a

bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruths, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God." And he imposed on himself a fast of twenty-one days.

The step sent a thrill of anxiety throughout the country. Friends from all parts of the country flocked to Delhi, where the fast was undertaken, Pandit Motilal Nehru presided over a "Unity Conference" to consider the whole question and suggest a solution to be placed before the country. Over a hundred and fifty leaders, Hindus and Mussalmans, met and sat for several days, and passed, several resolutions. But the conference was far from being an expression of the true repentance that Gandhiji had asked for, and it looked as though it would have to break up without any tangible result. "Neither party seemed to be able," said the Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta, who attended the conference by invitation, and who should be regarded as a detached observer, "to trust the professions of goodwill made by the other, and generous advances were treated as a bait to secure some more substantial advances." There were terms and counter-terms proposed by opposing groups, who seemed to have met together to strike a bargain and achieve heart-unity.

But among the men who endeavoured to the utmost to infuse a spirit of seriousness and even of contrition for man having turned beast and denied religion, one of the foremost, if not the foremost, was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He came to the conference resolved, he said, "to allow no palliation in respect to what he had come to regard as the undeniable excess or unreasonable demands of any party for the sake of expediency and to observe no reserve in declaring the truth, however bitter and heart-rending it might prove to be for anyone." It may be said that without Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the second and most important resolution might not have been passed. That resolution read as follows : "This Conference declares that it is not only wrong against law but also against religion for anyone to take the law into his own hands, either for the purpose of retaliation or punishment, and therefore declares that all points in dispute shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or where that is impossible, by reference to a court of law."

But an even more difficult question was that of the cow. The

resolution as drafted provided that "Hindus must not expect the exercise of the right of cow-killing to be stopped by force (whether physical or legislative) but only by mutual consent." The Hindus then said : "If we Hindus give away so much, you Muslim must agree to a further clause guaranteeing that no cows will be killed in any place, where they are not killed now, and that you will gradually reduced all cow-killing, until the practice is completely stopped." That was a difficult thing for the Mussalmans to accept, especially the last clause. But the Maulana again came to the rescue. His moving eloquence which proceeded out of a heart overflowing with contrition and generosity won the day. As a Hindu leader who was attending the conference wrote : "He is known to be one of the best speakers in the country. He enjoys the further advantage of being a great scholar and theologian in his own community. On the present occasion he surpassed himself in the pathos and fervour of his eloquence and the generosity of his sentiment, prompted (as he himself pointed out) by the special circumstances of India consistently with the strict observance of the practice of his own faith. The appeal which he made to both communities was the turning-point of the discussion. He asked his co-religionists to remember that cow-slaughter even for purposes of sacrifice was not a fundamental part of their religion, and he assured his Hindu friends that there were not a few Mussalman leaders who had not only never tested beef themselves, but were endeavouring to reduce the use of it among Mussalmans, if only to show their spirit of brotherliness with the Hindus." That moved the Mussalmans, but they were not prepared to accept the final clause. It seemed to be a matter of touch and go. The President adjourned the meeting and appealed both to the Hindus and Muslims to hold consultations again and make up their minds to what was possible. The prospect appeared gloomy for a time, until at last the Maulana's appeal touched a responsive chord in Pandit Malaviyaji's heart. He got up and in a tense atmosphere announced that the Hindus did not mind the words about complete stoppage of cow-slaughter being deleted. The whole conference was for the first time swept by a wave of enthusiasm and made the rest of the work absolutely easy. The earlier drafts of resolutions had taken largely the form of rights; now a realization came that there were to rights without responsibilities and that the solution of the trouble lay in each being ready

to fulfil one's obligations rather than to assert one's rights.

After the termination of Gandhiji's fast the Muslim leaders gathered round Gandhiji's bed. He spoke to them in a feeble voice but with deep emotion : "I do not know what is the will of God, but on this day I would beseech you to promise to lay down your lives if necessary for the cause (Hindu-Muslim unity)." Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad renewed the solemn pledge. The Hakim Saheb is alas no more, nor is there now amidst us that man of God, Deenabandhu C.F. Andrews, who was present to record this solemn pledge. But the Maulana, think God, is still with us Both the Hakimji and the Deenabandhu were among his closest friends, and he knows that he owes it as much to them as to Gandhiji to carry out the pledge.

But the fulfilment of the task lies, as Gandhiji said, in God's hands. What will not be forgotten is the noble part played by the Maulana in the Unity Conference that the fast had occasioned. I was taking to the good Metropolitan the other day about the Maulana's work, and he has written to me a letter which I am happy to reproduce here :

> "I look back to the peace conference in the autumn of 1924 as one of the most important incidents of my life, and among the many Hindus and Mahomedan leaders whom I met on that occasion there are three or four who stand out in my memory by reason of the eloquence with which they advocated a spirit of reason and toleration which ultimately found concrete expression in the resolutions which were adopted. At the commencement of the meeting of the Subjects Committe there was a general tendency for the spokesmen of the rival communities to insist on their rights regardless of the effect of such action on others who held diverse views. Gradually it was recognized that, while freedom of thought and conviction is legitimate, its expression must take into due consideration the recognition of the equal rights of others to a similar expression of their conviction. Among the spokesmen of the Mahomedan side who exercised an outstanding influence was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. I listened with admiration to the clearness with which he made his several points without undue repetition and in conciliatory language. He spoke in Urdu, and one could see the effect which his

clear reasoning had upon his audience, Sixteen years have not deemed the impression which his eloquence and fair-mindedness made upon me. The fact of his election to the Presidentship of the Congress is further testimony of the quality which he possesses, and I hope that he may be able to draw together rival communities who at the present time seem to be drifting further apart."

But neither the fast nor the resolution of the Unity Conference solved the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. The conference was attended by most of the prominent leaders, but they had not come as representatives of their communities, and none had the strength to get the warring groups to listen to them or act upon the resolutions. Almost immediately after the last riots broke out in Jubbulpore and Allahabad. In 1925 the sad tale was repeated at various places in the country; so much so that in May of that year Gandhiji, in sheer exasperation and almost in desperation, had to declare at a public meeting.

"I have admitted my incompetence. I have admitted that I have been found wanting as a physician prescribing a cure for this malady. I do not find that either Hindu or Muslim are ready to accept my cure, and therefore I simply nowadays confine myself to a passing mention of this problem and content myself by saying that some day or other we Hindus and Muslims will have to come together, if we want the deliverance of our country. And if it is to be our lot that before we can come together, we must shed one another's blood, then I say the sooner we do so the better it is for us. If we propose to break one another's heads, let us do so in a manly way." The situation, even fifteen years since that pathetic declaration, is just the same, perhaps worse. But among those who hold steadfastly to the will to unite whatever happens—and that is what will ultimately count—the name of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stands in the forefront.

X

VIEWS ON RELIGION

In considering the Maulana's attitude to religion and views on religious matters there are one or two things that must be borne in

mind. The principal thing is that though he comes of a long line of ancestors who were theologians and must have been formalists, he had emancipated his mind from all the effects of the old theological tradition and an orthodox education, and as we saw at the end of the fourth chapter, he had formulated his own critical method of approach to the various problems. To understand his approach thoroughly it is necessary to understand the methods of the various theological schools which flourished among the Muslims, the methods of reasoning adopted by various commentators, the scholarsticism that flourishes today and the different schools of Islamic rationalism. The Maulana has promulgated a new Ilm-e-Kalam—a new method of rational interpretation of Islamic teaching. It is impossible for me to go into any detailed study of this, and perhaps the Western reader does not need this. A few broad facts may be noted here.

He brought a strictly rational and logical attitude of mind to bear on all questions and refused to take anything for granted, or any interpretation as sacrosanct because it had the stamp of antiquity about it or the authority of big names behind it. He is not one of those who strive to prove that as there is nothing new under the sun, even so all modern scientific discoveries are to be found in the scriptures. He has a distinctly scientific and historical outlook, and he examines every text not only in its immediate context and environment but in the setting and in relation to the running purpose of the whole book in which it occurs. Above all he differentiates what he calls the vital roots of religion from its innumerable branches and leaves. When these things are borne in mind, it will not be difficult to understand his interpretation of Islam and his attitude to other religions.

The most authoritative source-book for the purpose is his monumental *Tarjumanual Quran*—Translation and Commentary on the Quran—which is prefaced with an exhaustive introduction explaining his way of approach. A little bit of history of this translation and commentary will not be out of place. Two of the three parts of the book had been done by him during his four years' internment in Ranchi, and he was engaged on the third part when suddenly one day the Deputy Commissioner came and carried out one of his usual elaborate "searches", seized all the manuscripts he found and sent them on to the Government of India. These were not returned to him even after his release from

internment until he approached the Government of India, through the late Lord Sinha, with the result that he was asked to approach the Bihar Government, who had been instructed to return them. He approached the Government of Bihar, who indeed returned the manuscripts but in a disordered and half-burnt condition. He was told that there had been a fire, and he was asked to thank his stars that at least part of them had been refused ! The Government did not know the destruction they had wrought, any more than J.S. Mill's servant knew what he had done when he had burnt Carley's manuscript of the first volume of the *French Revolution*. But even as Carlyle rewrote the whole volume, the Maulana rewrote the whole of the translation and the commentary !

The Maulana's commentary is held in high esteem even by those who do not see eye to eye with him in matters social and political, because the Maulana's profound learning and deeply critical scholarship are unpublished not only among Muslim scholars and divines in India but in other Islamic lands.

But to turn to the work itself. He starts with the first fundamental proposition, viz. that the roots—or rather the root—of all religions is one, that every race and country and age had its own teacher and prophet and the cardinal principles that they taught were the same. "The Quran says," to quote the Maulana, "no matter what tne country and what the age, all the prophets sent by God taught the same universal truth for the welfare of mankind, viz. Faith and Good Works, i.e., Worship of one God and Right Conduct. Anything that is said in contravention of this is not true religion : 'Certainly,' says the Quran (6, 18), 'I have sent for every people in the world a prophet (who taught) them to worship one God and never to be carried away by passions.' Also : 'Never did I send before you a prophet but with the command that I am the only God to be worshipped and no other.' The Quran also says that God created all men as human beings, but they adopted varying names and labels and broke the unity of mankind to pieces. As you were born of various stocks, you bore different names and were divided from one another. You were born in different countries, and therefore people of one country are fighting those of another. You belong to different races, and therefore you war with one another. You were born with different colours, and so there have been colour-wars springing from mutual hate. Language again became one more cause of division. There are countless

other divisions—rich and poor, master and servant, high-born and low-born, strong and weak, and so on. All these divisions cannot but make for discord and strife. What then is the silken string that can thread these scattered beads and make of divided mankind one united brotherhood ? That silken string, that sacred link, is the Worship of one God. How-much-so-ever divided you may be, you cannot have different Gods. You are the servant of One Lord, and your prayers and worship are before the One Sacred Throne. No matter what your race, tribe or country, the moment you surrender yourselves to one father, He will put an end to all your earthly quarrels and unite your hearts together. You will then realize that the world is your country and mankind is one family and you are children of the same father."

Also :

> "The Quran challenges anyone to prove that other inspired books or religions or other seers or prophets taught anything different from the eternal Truth taught in the Quran : 'If you deny the Truth [of my teaching] support your denial by any book published before this, or any wisdom or truth that you may have had handed down to you.' (46.3). The Quran thus declares that the eternal truths of all religions support one another. And if that is so, it is proved that at the back of them all is one Eternal Truth."

Next comes the declaration about the kernel and the shell of religion, the root and the branches of religion. "The Quran says that all religious teaching consists of two parts—one giving the eternal principles, i.e., the source of religion, and the other outside form of trappings. One is the principal thing, the other is subordinate. The first is called the Faith by the Quran, the second is called the Rules of Conduct. This second thing is called *sharaa* or *nusuk* or *minhaj*. The first two terms mean roads, the third term means the ritual of worship. The Quran says that religions of the world differ not in the principal thing, viz., the eternal truths, but in the rules of conduct, ways of worship; they differ not in the roots, but in the leaves and branches, not in the spirit but in the outward form or body. This difference was inevitable. The object of Religion is the well-being of mankind, but the conditions of mankind vary with the age and country. One country or age

required a particular kind and mode of living, another required a different kind. Every religion in its outward form, therefore, reflected the spirit of the age and country in which it was taught, and it suited that age and country. 'Oh Prophet !' says the Quran, 'I have prescribed a particular form of worship for every group of people, which it observes. Men should not, therefore, quarrel about these forms' (22.67). The Quran goes further and declares wherein lies the essence of religion and how man can achieve his welfare. The Quran declares that religion does not consist in the direction facing which a man offers prayers, whether it should be the East or the West. The essence of religion lies in the worship of One God and Right Conduct. And then the Quran proceeds to define these :

It is not righteousness
That yet turn your faces
Towards East or West;
But it is righteousness—
To believe in God
And the Last Day,
And the Angels,
And the Book,
And the Messengers.
To Spend your substance
Out of love for Him,
For your kin,
For orphans
For the needy,
For the Wayfarer,
For those who ask,
And for the ransom of slaves;
To fulfil the contract,
Which ye have made,
And to be firm and patient,
In pain (or suffering)
And adversity,
And throughout
All periods of panic
Such are the people
Of Truth, the God-fearing. (2.177)."

I have here made use of Mr. A. Yusuf Ali's rhythmic translation, which is the latest in the field. Maulana's own translation has "books" instead of "book" and "keep your vow or pledge" instead of "fulfil the contracts ye have made."

One may compare with this great text of the Quran the last nineteen verses of the second discourse of the Bhagwad Gita or the attributes of the Devotee given in the twelfth discourse, or the six Beatitudes, in order to see the point of the Maulana's commentary, given above on this Quranic text.

"An then," proceed the Maulana, "look at this great text (I want you not to read it cursorily but to mark and read every word carefully) : 'To each among you, (i.e., for the followers of every religion) I have prescribed a particular law and a way. If God had so willed, He would have made you alike, (i.e., there would have been no difference of ritual or ceremonial). But He made you different to test in [the observance of] the commands. He has given you: So strive, as in a race, in virtuous conduct (not in emphasizing these differences)' (5.48). When the Quran was given the followers of various religions were engaged in emphasizing the external forms of religion and mistaking them for the essence of religion. Everyone thought that the adherents of religions other than his had no salvation before him, for their ceremonials and rituals were not the same as his own. The Quran declares that this is a denial of religion. The essence of religion is the Worship of One God and Right Conduct. This cannot be the exclusive patrimony of an individual or a people. . . . Ceremonials and rituals will vary and will continue to vary with the age and the country. . . . The text goes further and says that God in His omniscience deliberately created this diversity. The text declares that different rules and ways were prescribed for different people; it does not say that *different religions* were prescribed for different people. For Religion for all is one; there cannot be more than one or different religions. The Quran declares that human nature is so constituted that these outward forms will differ, and everyone thinks that his way is superior to that of others, he cannot look at his own way from the point of view of his opponents. But even as your way is excellent in your own eye, even so in other people's eyes their way is excellent. Toleration, therefore, is the only way."

I come now to the three verses of the Quran which, according to the Maulana, sum up all that the Quran has to say, sum up

indeed all that numerous tomes have been written to say. Those are verses 92, 93, 94 of Sura 21 :

92. (The teaching we gave through all these prophets was this) "Of yours verily is a single brotherhood of people (there are no separate religions and no separate groups); and I am the single Lord and cherisher of you all : therefore worship Me only" (and do not be separate in this).
93. "But people created divisions among themselves, cut their one Religion into little bits. In the end all have to return to Us."
94. "Therefore (remember this is the truth) whoever works deeds of righteousness and has faith in God, his endeavour will not be in vain. We [are there] to record his right deeds."

"What," comments the Maulana, "was the sum and substance of the teaching of all the prophets who appeared in different ages and among different people ? What was their message to mankind of different ages and groups ? Was it one or many ? Verse 92 in measured words declares that their message was one only, and it was this—'You are one single brotherhood of people, the Cherisher or Protector of you all is one only. Therefore, do not divide yourselves, worship Him only."

"But people forgot this teaching, and cut up Religion into numerous bits and made several religions out of it, and each group cut itself adrift from another. Diversity instead of unity, separation instead of union became their battle-cry. But in the end everyone has to return to Him. There everything will be shown up, and every group will see where its forgetfulness of the right thing had led it.

"Glory to be God. By the wonderful magic of its diction the Quran has in one brief verse compressed whole volumes on this subject. And then it is not a mere statement, it is so put that it becomes one unbreakable chain of reasoning : (a) No matter how many divisions you may have created, your brotherhood is verily one; (b) I am the sole Protector of you all, and there is no other; (c) When the whole of mankind is one brotherhood and their Protector is one without a second, then why should not the frame of worship and obeisance be also one ? Why should there be two ?

Therefore, worship only him, for you are one and for One alone. There is all through the mention on One and not more. The word *therefore* here clinches the whole argument.

"All three unities are condensed in this one verse : The unity of brotherhood, the unity of God, and the unity of religion and worship. And these three unities are the essential principle's of the message of the Quran. The Quran everywhere proclaims the same message, and lays the whole foundation of its teaching and warning on these. Unity of brotherhood means that in the multifarious diversity of mankind is hidden its unity. Forget not this. However diverse may be your races, countries, tongues, you are one family of the human races, and you are really one brotherhood. Unity of God means that no matter how many different names of God you may have coined, no matter how many different place of worship you may have established, no matter how many different conception you may have formed of Him, the differences you have created cannot make the Reality different. Just as you are one brotherhood, in the same way your Protector is also One, and no other. Unity of worship means that if there is one brotherhood, there should be one religion only and not more. Therefore, right conduct consists in worshipping only one God and not to be divided and separated in this matter.

"In one verse again (94) have been clearly explained the essentials of salvation and righteousness. That is inspite of mankind having been cut up into so many different groups, the essentials of salvation and righteousness are the same. The Quran says they have been the same throughout the ages—Faith in God and Right Conduct. The endeavour of the man who works righteously and who is filled with faith in God will never be in vain, it is sure to be accepted of God. Bear in mind the word 'whoever.' The Jews said, 'Become Jews'; the Nazarenes said, 'Become Nazarenes'; the Quran says, 'Whoever works deeds of righteousness and has faith in God.' No matter who he is, if he have faith in God and acts righteously, his faith and his work will never go in vain. He is sure to have his reward. That is the law. 'His faith and his work will go on our record. Who can rub it off Our record ? Let every one in the world regard it as wasted, it will be there written ineffaceably in our account. What an important proposition this is, and yet if you look at the commentaries on the Quran, the whole importance has been lost in a maze of

were no Jews, exclaimed, "Why, no. There wasn't one. What difference does that make ? In this town there is no such thing as Methodist mumps, Baptist domestic troubles, Presbyterian poverty, or Catholic broken legs." The Maulana said : "That indeed is the right attitude."

Does the Maulana believe in the domination of one religious group over another ? In his statement made before the court in 1923 the Maulana has indeed used the phrase "sovereignty of Islam." But his commentary makes his meaning abundantly clear. The word "Islam", he has made it clear, "means the acceptance of truth and acting according to it. The Quran says that the essence of religion is the same everywhere, viz. to follow the path ordained by God. That path of Right holds not only for mankind but for the whole of creation." Sovereignty of Islam, therefore, means nothing more that the sovereignty of those in whose thought, word and deed is reflected complete surrender to God, or to use the Biblical language, those who accept the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, Islam, he says over and over again, is no new religion; it is simply a call to those who had strayed away from God and the paths of righteousness to come back to God and righteousness.

XI

CHARACTERISTICS

Of a tall, erect and stately figure and with eyes that flash intelligence and inspire awe the Maulana reminds one of those great figures like Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari, who represented in their lives the best in Islamic culture. There is a polish and refinement of manner that compels respect wherever he goes, but there is also a reserve which does not make it easy for one to class him with some of those leaders who are accessible to everyone, who will be pestered by all and sundry, and who therefore, whether they want it or not, make themselves popular everywhere. His deep learning and insatiable appetite for knowledge combined with his contemplative temperament make it impossible for him to go and mix with the messes, listen to their endless tales of woe and carry comfort to them. Not that there is any lack of feeling in him for the downtrodden of the land. As I heard him speak the

Vedas or his commentary on the Bhagwad Gita called *Gita Rahasya*. And so it is with the Maulana. Very few people know that the great Tilak was a great philologist too. Well, the Maulana is also a great philologist. But his philological pursuits are indulged in mostly nowadays at the breakfast table. He asks for the equivalents of words in Indian languages, and whenever he comes across a new word which catches his fancy he beams with delight. Once I used a word which is common in Gujarati for the word "postscript." It delighted him. It was composed of two Persian words really, but whilst it had become current in Gujarati it was quite new to the great Persian and Arabic scholar. Often enough thereafter he would tell me; "That word *taza qualam* is beautifully coined, and we must adopt it." When the Working Committee members sit down to lunch or dinner they try to beguile the monotony of their sometimes arid and even acrimonious discussions by "mere trivolity." This with the Maulana takes the shape of discussions of the menus of various countries and various ages in history of which the Maulana has an accurate knowledge, and then he breaks out into some of his philosophical titbits which keep the company entertained and instructed all the time. "You Tamilians," he would say, "are very fond of tamarind, but you perhaps do not know the derivation of that word. The Spanish word is *tamarindo*, but the Spaniards borrowed it from the Arabs. In Arabic the word is *Tamar-e-Hind*, *tamar* meaning 'date' and *Hind* 'India.' There were no dates in India, and this was the fruit that most corresponded with the date. So they called it 'the date of India.'" Someone mentioned the word "religion," and the Maulana immediately explained the distinction between *deen* and *mazhab*. "*Mazhab*", he said, "is loosely called religion, but in Arabic the word is *deen* and *mazhab* means the 'way' or 'the road.' And *deen* is the same *Denaye* in Avesta, meaning duty, rule, law; and that really is the meaning of *deen*, and as the word is in Avesta it should be in Sanskrit too. I will not hazard the guess that it is the same as *dharma*, though *dharma* also has the same connotation. It is amazing how words have come down from age to age and from country to country. Look at the Sanskrit word *Samnyas*. It means renouncing the world and going to the forest. Now *Samnyas* seems to have become *Sassan* in old Persian, and a dynasty in Persia was called *Sassanide*, as its first king was said to have led an ascetic's or *Samnyasi's* life before his accession to

the throne. And oh, for the days when it was so easy to make kings ! A king died intestate and left instructions to appoint as his successor whomsoever one came upon immediately the gates of the city were opened."

The Maulana is a great Oriental scholar and his knowledge of Arabic and Persian is profound, but when he speaks he speaks such chaste, elegant and yet simple Urdu that all can follow him without difficulty. Indeed, his language is what Gandhiji calls Hindustani, the *lingua franca* of India. He never seems to be in want of the right word, and sometimes even his casual talk is pregnant with homely and telling similes and with meaning which makes a way into your understanding as nothing else does. I happened in 1936 to be casually talking to him for a few minutes, and someone referred to the simple faith and devotion of our masses. I said : "It is because of that faith that we fought several campaigns with a fair amount of success." This casual remark drew from him a commentary which I wish I could reproduce in his own language. It was an education and a treat to hear him. He said : "Oh yes, it did all that, and it still can do so. But the difficulty is this. Religion is a force whose power it is impossible to gauge. A bullock cart in charge of a stupid driver may at the worst cause an accident resulting in some injury to the driver and one or two more people. But we know what happens when there is a railway accident. Hundreds of lives are lost and untold damage is done. Religion is like the mighty steam engine which needs to be in charge of a skilful and wideawake driver. In the hands of an unworthy driver it can cause untold misery. To our great misfortune religion has fallen into unworthy hands. They have turned it into irreligion, and I do not know where we are going."

Though he speaks little English, his library is full of all the best English and French classics. He has read many of the English poets, including Shakespeare and Wordsworth and Shelley, but the one he likes best, he told me, is Byron. He seems to agree with Goethe's dictum that the English "show no poet who is to be compared with him," and apart from his poetry the thing that appeals to him in Byron is the heroic way in which he espoused the cause of the liberation of Greece and met his death in the attempt, the part he played in revolutionary politics everywhere and his impassioned plea through all his utterances for freedom

of life and thought.

The world's great thinkers are all there in his library—Goethe Spinoza, Rousseau, Marx, Havelock Ellis—there are the Upanishads and the Vedas, there are all the volumes of the People of all Nations, Historians, History, International Library of Famous Literature, and so on. He has with his voracious appetite read all the Waverley novels and everything of Dumas and Hugo, especially the novels about the French Revolution. Tolstoy and Ruskin he has read more than once, and books of history and philosophy, are his costant companions. Once on the railway train I found him with a volume on Nyaya Vaisheshika Philosophy, and he has time even in this busy age to enjoy a volume on Madame Jeanne Pompadour. The latest volumes on the Prophet and Omar the Great are there on a rack of books opposite his writing-table, but so also are books of Flaubert, and among them *Madame Bovary* ! I need not mention numerous cupboards full of Arabic and Persian and Turkish books whose names even are unknown to us.

He keeps himself in constant touch with the outside world by a voluminous correspondence. Among his correspondents have been the late Zaghlul Pasha and Fathi Bey, who was his great friend. He was in close touch with the late Mustafa Kemal Pasha and other leading men of Turkey. Almost all the leaders of the old Young Turks' Party which brought about the revolution of 1908 through its "Union and Progress" programme were the personal friends of the Maulana. This party remained in power till the beginning of the last European war. Ahmed Reda, Speaker of the Turkish Parliament, Dr. Selaheddin, Enver Pasha and Djaved Bey had correspondence with him. The famous Radical of Iran, Toqui Zadeh, was amongst the friends of the Maulana.

His absorption in his studies has given him a kind of predilection for loneliness, and though he is most affable and even deferential he has very few friends. Though a finished conversationalist, he inclines most towards reticence. Due to his reserved nature, little is known of his life to most of us beyond the fact that he loves a cup of tea and that he is a kind of chain-smoker.

His life is absolutely simple and in his office room and drawing room you do not find anything but books. There are no photographs even. Regarding his cigarettes, I asked him what happened to him when he went to jail. He said : "I am glad you

have asked this question. I had ten cigarettes in my cigarette-case when I was taken to Alipur Jail in 1921. I smoked two and handed over the balance to the jail authorities. Deshabandhu Das twitted me, saying I should need them in jail. I said, "Not until I am released. And I tell you within a short time I did not even miss them." In this respect he resembles the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, who once told me : "I love the good things of life, but I am not wedded to them. I can give them up at a moment's notice." And he differs from men like Mr. De Valera, or say Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Mr. Thomas once told Mr. De Valera that he was surprised that he "had no petty vices", in that he did not even smoke. "No, Mr Thomas", said Mr. De Valera, "you English are responsible for that. You may remember that on one occasion—memorable to me—I was arrested and taken to your Lincoln Jail. Just before we arrived at the prison I said to the policeman in charge of me that I would like a cigarette. He had no objection, so I lit one. Then looking at the cigarette I mused : I suppose the British intend to hang me, and this will be my last cigarette if, however, I should get out of this jail I will never have another cigarette so that I can retain the memory of this one.' As you know I did get out, and have smoked tobacco since." An exactly similar thing happened to Sardar Vallabhbhai in 1930, when he was arrested for the first time. He was not going to be hanged, his term of imprisonment then was ludicrously brief—only three months--but he refused to accept a cigarette from the police official escorting him and has not since touched tobacco. The Maulana lived without a cigarette for over fifteen months, but had one immediately on release and did not decline to smoke in the Meerut Prison where he was allowed the liberty.

His habits are regular, he is a very early riser, has no other "petty vices" save smoking, and I do not think he ever visits places of entertainment. He shuns shows and processions and rarely accepts invitations to late dinners and the like. A finished and polished speaker, he has none of the strength or weaknesses of a demagogue. His contribution to a debate is always most valuable, and he is at his best in committee meetings, He can sweep audiences off their feet by the direct, simple, incisive eloquence of his speech, but he is not essentially a man of the people.

XII

ANOTHER CAMPAIGN

Followed years of self-revelation and self-examination. Swaraj was to come in a year—under conditions which people conveniently forgot. They remembered not that the conditions were not fulfilled, but they remembered that Swaraj had not come. The effort that they had put forth was evidently for that year. Many went back to their old professions, many regretted that they had sacrificed anything. The most discontented were the intellectuals who had no heart in the constructive programme suggested by Gandhiji as an indispensable condition and of preparation for another struggle. They were impatient for a revision and wanted to carry on the struggle through legislatures.

On his release in January 1923 from prison the Maulana found that the Congress organization had become a house divided against itself. Gandhiji on the eve of his arrest had left only one message, viz. that of constructive work as an antidote for the spirit of violence of which the Chaurichaura outrage was a symptom. He had gone to jail with full faith in that programme and in the nation's capacity to carry it out. There was a group in the country which wanted loyally to carry out Gandhiji's message. It was headed by Shri C. Rajagopalachari, and included leaders like Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendraprasad and Dr. Ansari. They were keen on maintaining the four-fold boycott, and so came to be called "no-changers." The other group, led by the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, the late Deshabandhu Das and late Vithalbhai Patel, represented those who felt that political results called for political action. They too swore by non-co-operation as a principle, as opposed to the Liberal doctrine of co-operation in the system of dyarchy. But they did not favour the continuance of the boycott of the legislatures. These, they held, ought to be captured by Congressmen and used to wreck dyarchy from within. They came to be known as "Pro-changers," as they wanted this change in Gandhiji's programme. The controversy between these groups sometimes became highly academic and even acrimonious. The Maulana made his own position clear in the course of a much awaited statement which

he issued soon after his release from prison. "No political programme," he contended, "could be held as sacrosanct. It had to be judged on its merits." He took a purely common sense and pragmatic view of the situation. The formula of non-co-operation Gandhiji had given to the country was dear to him, but as a man of the world he saw that neither the ideal of non-co-operation nor that of non-violence would be served if the two groups continued to wrangle among themselves and neutralize one another's efforts. He therefore set himself to the task of establishing some kind of co-ordination of activity if not unity between them without identifying himself with either. In this work he found himself in his element. He enjoyed the confidence and regard of both the groups. He threw himself heart and soul into his task, often undertaking long tours for consultations and discussions. Among the Mussalmans there was the Jamiat-ul Ulema group. Having at the outset of the non-co-operation movement issued the *fatwa* (injunction) which declared co-operation with Government as sinful from a religious point of view, they felt they could not with any show of consistency now favour the entry of Congressmen into legislatures which were the creation of Government. At the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress they had reiterated their *fatwa*. It was clear that there could be no compromise so long as this authoritarian objection stood in the way. It was a task to dislodge them from that stand. But the Maulana proved up to it, though it must have taxed to the utmost his resourcefulness and dialectical skill.

A special session of the Congress was held at Delhi on September 15, 1923, under the presidentship of the Maulana. In his address he presented his compromise formula, which was that those who believed in the Council-entry programme should be permitted to do so in order to capture those bodies and non-cooperate from within, while those who did not believe in that programme should devote themselves to carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress. The formula was adopted, and the Parliamentary programme of the Congress thus came into being. Looking back upon this episode now, one cannot help being struck by the uncommon political shrewdness of which the Maulana gave proof at that juncture. "I know that the Council-entry programme would not carry us very far," he explained to me, "but I had my eye on the future. Since the Parliamentary

mentality had taken hold of a considerable and influential section of Congressmen and Congress leaders, I felt that in the absence of any programme of direct action the Parliamentary programme might serve a useful purpose."

It is idle to speculate about the might-have-beens and whether the Council-entry interlude did not as a matter of fact retard the direct action programme which Gandhiji had in prospect as soon as the atmosphere in the country was purged of the spirit of violence. The Maulana's action had, however, one definite result. It saved the Congress from being divided into two warring camps and the masses from demoralization which would have followed during Gandhiji's imprisonment. It also paved the way for Gandhiji's final step, which while preserving the principle of non-co-operation converted what was political compromise into a living unity.

Then came the Ali brothers, who after a little bit of vacillation also took the same attitude. Gandhiji on release from prison in 1924 had no difficulty in making his decision. It was no use compelling people to go against their cherished inclinations or to impose a mental attitude on them. He retained the opinion that Council-entry was inconsistent with non-co-operation, but he counselled the "no-changers" to abandon their attitude of hostility towards the Council-goers. He went on yielding more and more to them in the conviction that they would became wiser with experience. "The best way in which I can help them," he said, "is by removing myself out of the way and by concentrating solely upon constructive work with the help of the Congress and in its name, and that too only so far as educated Indians will permit me to do so."

The Council programme was quite successful so far as fireworks went; there were magnificent speeches, Government sustained defeat upon defeat, but all these made us no stronger. And as years went by demoralization crept into the ranks, and Pandit Motilal Nehru had often to take drastic disciplinary action. He had himself begun to get tired of the arid programmes in the Legislatures, and his intimate friend and colleague Deshabandhu Das had died, leaving him desolate and forlorn.

Hindu-Muslim tension was growing every year; there were fierce riots in Multan, Bareilly, Nagpur and other places in 1927. Unity Conferences were held; good resolutions were adopted, only

to be broken by those who cared not for these resolutions. Gandhiji worked away in silence at Sabarmati, rarely attending committee meetings, and even when he attended the Congress he rarely addressed the delegates. At the Madras Congress the resolution altering the objective of the Congress to independence was passed in Gandhiji's absence. He would direct local Satyagraha campaigns like the unique campaign in Bardoli in 1928, where Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the staunchest of his followers, following his guidance and inspiration, was able to mould heroes out of clay. It was not the Council's programme but these successful struggles that were again changing the mentality of the country.

The announcement of the coming of the Simon Commission became the occasion for another countrywide awakening. The boycott of this Commission was as complete and effective as the boycott of the Prince of Wales in 1921, and the death of Lala Lajpatrai, which was hastened by a brutal attack on his chest by a police official, did everything that was needed to produce a revolutionary mentality in the youths of the country. There were savage *lathi* charges, among the victims of which in Lucknow were men like Pandits Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant. The story of this charge is told by Pandit Nehru in an unforgettable chapter in his *Autobiography*, "Experience of Lathi Charges." "And those faces, full of hate and blood-lust, almost mad, with no trace of sympathy or touch of humanity ! Probably the faces on our side just then were equally hateful to look at, and the fact that we were mostly passive did not fill our minds and hearts with love for our opponents, or add to the beauty of our countenances." Anyone who cannot understand Pandit Jawaharlal's uncompromising hostility to British Imperialism must read at least this out of the many poignant chapters in his great book. The iron had gone into his soul. And by this time Pandit Motilal Nehru had frankly got disgusted with the Council programme. A year's ultimatum given at the Calcutta Congress held under his presidentship, asking Government to concede immediately the national demand for Dominion status, or to be faced with the Congress claim for complete independence, was nearing its end. In August 1929, the A.I.C.C. resolved to call upon the Congress members of the legislature to resign their seats. Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy, made an announcement in October, in

reply to which the Working Committee and other prominent leaders of the country published a statement in which they made it clear that they would be satisfied if the conference Lord Irwin had proposed "would meet not to discuss when Dominion Status is to be established, but to frame a scheme of Dominion Constitution for India," and asked for certain tangible signs of "a real change of heart" and a real desire on the part of the British people to see India "a free and self-respecting nation," as Gandhiji explained it in a further statement. The debate in the House of Commons and the House of Lord made it abundantly clear that there was no such change and no such desire, and a meeting between Lord Irwin and the leaders that took place a little later, although it was cordial, did not improve matters. The events thus led irresistibly on to the Lahore Congress resolutions declaring independence to be the objective and civil disobedience to be the means to be employed for its achievement. The president, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, poured out his righteous indignation in his presidential address and made a passionate call to the country not to rest until complete independence was won.

Where were the Muslims at this juncture ? The Ali brothers had since 1924 drifted farther away from the Congress, and though they attended the Lahore Congress, they had done so only to warn Gandhiji that the Muslims would not co-operate with the Congress in its campaign of civil disobedience and it would be disastrous for the Congress to launch the campaign without Muslim co-operation. Dr. Ansari, who was all for the Congress, was also afraid of the consequences and therefore far from enthusiastic. So were some of the other Congress-minded Muslim leaders. But Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had no misgivings in the matter. He threw his whole weight on the side of the Congress, and he had no doubt that the Muslim masses would not fail to respond to the Congress call. His optimism was fully justified by the events, as one Muslim province, the North-West Frontier, alone sent several thousand people to jail and underwent untold hardship and suffering. The response of the Muslims in other provinces was in no way negligible, and when Maulana Abul Kalam Azad after his imprisonment in 1930 as the Acting President of the Congress named Dr. Ansari as his successor, the latter had no hesitation in filling his place.

The campaign of 1930 was no less epic in character than the one in 1921. In a sense it was even more epic in that it evoked a very much larger measure of sacrifice and suffering and gave evidence of exemplary non-violence in face of organized and brutal violencc on the part of Government. Men who had remained aloof until now joined the struggle; and the peasants sacrified their all. In the mass movement that followed Gandhiji's historic Salt March, thousands upon thousands heroically bore *lathi* charges, women bore brutal assaults, and some lost their lives. Even the Governmenι were tired of the shameful exhibition of their brute strength against these unoffending millions and Lord Irwin took early opportunity to cry a halt. Followed the historic negotiations between Lord Irwin and Gandhiji and a truce which did honour to the genuine desire of the Viceroy for peace.

This is hardly the place to follow the sequence of events after the truce. They have been narrated by Pandit Nehru in the *Autobiography* and by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya in the *History of the Congress*. Two or three things may be noted here. The aftermath of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement proved that there was neither any desire on the part of Government to part with power, or any inclination on the part of the officials in India to abandon the spirit of domination and to adopt a spirit of service. But the Congress Working Committee exercised the patience of Job to prevent the breakdown of the truce and urged Gandhiji to attend the Round Table Conference inspite of his predilections to the contrary. Before he proceeded there the Working Committee had defined their attitude on the communal question and declared that "the Communal question can only be solved on strictly national lines and that the Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof (i.e., of the Communal question) in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned"; but in view of the situation in the country the Working Committee adopted a scheme "as a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted communalism and undiluted nationalism."

How Gandhiji went to the Round Table Conference, how he tried to have Dr. Ansari, the representative of Nationalist Muslims, on the conference and failed, how his efforts at a

communal agreement were foiled by a clique created by Government, is a story that is no part of this biographical sketch. What Mr. Benthall, an English commerical representative for India in the Round Table Conference, wrote in a secret circular is a sad commentary on the part played by the British Government and one more striking proof of the fact that they had reduced the "Divide and Rule" policy to a diabolically clever technique. Mr. Benthall reports with exultation that "Mr. Gandhi landed in India with empty hands," that "after the General Election the right wing of Government made up its mind to break up the Congress and to fight the (Round Table) conference and to fight the Congress," that the "Muslims have become firm allies of the Europeans," and that "they are very satisfied with their own position and are prepared to work with us," that "the Muslims were all right; the Minorities' Pact and Government's general attitude ensured that. So were the Princes and the Minorities."

This all too brief narration is necessary to understand the Maulana's attitude on the communal question. The hand of death soon after removed Dr. Ansari, one of the greatest of the Nationalist Muslims, and the Maulana was left as one of the few outstanding Muslims in the Congress leadership. But the events had burnt the conviction deep on his mind that a solution of the communal problem was impossible unless and until the British Government had withdrawn and left the two communities free to resolve the quarrel between themselves.

Throughout the troubled years after Gandhiji's return from the Round Table Conference and his imprisonment and the ruthless repression carried on by the Willingdon Government, his release and thereafter, the Maulana has been consistently with the National Congress. Civil disobedience was suspended, and it was decided to revive the Swaraj Party; and Gandhiji declared in a letter addressed to Dr. Ansari that though "his views on the utility of the legislatures are well known", "it is not only the right but it is the duty of every Congressman, who for some reason or other does not want to or cannot take part in civil resistance and who has faith in entry into the legislatures, to seek entry and form combinations in order to prosecute the programme."

XIII

AS A CONSTRUCTIVE WORKER

How, inspite of the consensus of opinion among Congressmen that the new reforms conceding a modicum of autonomy in the provinces were unacceptable, the Congress Working Committee decided to accept offices in the provinces where Congressmen were in a majority in the Legislative Assemblies, is a chapter of absorbing interest, but it does not belong to this book.

Along with acceptance of offices the Working Committee of the Congress appointed in 1937 a Parliamentary Sub-Committee consisting of three of its veterans, tried, trusted and true, all of whom had been Congress presidents, and none of whom had an axe to grind—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendraprasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Gunther, the popular American journalist, has called the first "a part of the brain and spiritual enlightenment", the second the "heart", and the third "the ruthless fist" of the Congress. It is an American way of putting things, a way which sees everything in terms of European and American politics, which, unlike Indian politics claiming to be based on non-violence, are based on anything but non-violence. It may be a picturesque but by no means a correct way. The Parliamentary Sub-Committee was formed in order to help the Congress ministries and the Congressmen in Legislative Assemblies to carry out the sacred pledges they had made to the country. The task required all the organizing skill, all the capacity to maintain discipline even at the risk of unpopularity, and all the rigid impartiality and the moral vigilance that they were capable of. Each of the three members were possessed of these qualities in a greater or less degree, but each approached his task with a conscientiousness and a spirit of co-operation which is rarely to be found. Each had his zones of work allotted to him because of the large size of the area in which the Committee had to operate, but there was joint and several responsibility attaching to all that they did. I have to content myself here with the work for which special credit must be given to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad :

Let no one suppose that because he is predominantly a

scholar and a thinker and a diplomat the Maulana had done no constructive work. I have especially in mind the Hindu-Muslim riots in Calcutta in the year 1925 or 1927 (I am not sure of the year). During those days when everyone who actively helped in restoring peace had to carry his life in his hand, the Maulana went about the length and breadth of that vast city, pleading with the Hindus at one place, arguing with his co-religionists at another, and desperately trying to limit the area of the disturbances. "In a thickly populated Hindu locality Mussalman tailors from a distant locality used every day to come and earn their living. I proceeded to the place," said the Maulana to me, narrating the story. "Not less than sixty to seventy tailors had been harboured by the Hindus in a Hindu house, but they would not dare to go home through areas where hooliganism was yet rampant. I thanked the Hindus for saving these people's lives, put them all in lorries and escorted them home. There were Hindus in a similar plight in Mussalman localities. A Mussalman had sheltered thirteen Hindus (eleven men and two women) in his house. At dead of night there were no *tongas* (hired horse-carriages) to be had and no taxis. I appealed to the Municipal Corporation for a taxi, put the refugees in this taxi and sent them to their homes. For three days and nights I had no rest or peace. At about midnight one day I received a note from Asansol to the effect that certain people had left the place for Calcutta two days before for a certain destination, but there was no news of them. I sought them out, sent news to their relatives, and saw that they got back home safe."

This story should have belonged to an earlier chapter, but I have deliberately brought it in here to describe the Maulana's constructive genius. I will say nothing regarding the Maulana's contribution to the solution of various local difficulties as they arose from time to time, nor regarding the Shia-Sunni dispute in Lucknow to the settlement of which the Maulana has devoted a large part of his time and energy. It still continues to be a baffling problem but I am sure that if anything can solve it ultimately it will be the Maulana's wise guidance and influence.

I come now to that work of the Maulana which entitles him to the gratitude of hundreds of thousands of peasants, and which of all the work that he has done will be reckoned as of the most enduring character. I mean his work for the tenants in Bihar. One of the solemn promises in the Congress Election manifesto was to give substantial relief to the peasants and tenants. The question was most difficult in the Zamindari provinces of the United Provinces and Bihar, inasmuch as it was not a matter directly between the peasants and Government but one between the tenants and the Zamindars (landlords) on the one hand and between both these and the Government on the other. A deputation of the Zamindars in Bihar went to Calcutta to meet the Congress leaders in October 1937, and met Babu Rajendraprasad. He felt that it would be a great thing if the Maulana's help could be secured in bringing about an amicable settlement between the Zamindars and the tenants. They also waited upon the Maulana, who readily agreed to go to Patna and give whatever help he could. He went, and for several days worked in closest co-operation with Babu Rajendraprasad. They kept in close touch also with the Prime Minister, who with some of his colleagues would attend the conference whenever a stage was reached which offered opportunities for taking decisions on points at issue. Before discussing with the Zamindars, both the Maulana and Babu Rajendraprasad had long talks with such Congressmen as were considered by them to be particularly interested in the tenants' problem. They ascertained from them their wishes and on that basis they carried on their talks with the Zamindars. It was not to be expected that the Zamindars would accept the tenants' demands in their entirety. Both the Maulana and Babu Rejendraprasad, however, tried their best to bring them as near the tenants' demand as possible.

There were ticklish questions involving the most delicate negotiations. "The first thing," said the Maulana to me, "that I got them to accept was the fundamental principle, viz., that the burden of the tenant ought to be reduced so that he may be able to keep body and soul together. Once they accepted this, the percentage was the next question. After that was settled came the question of dealing with refractory tenants. The existing law enabled a Zamindar to ruin the tenant and deprive him of his all. But once the principle of justice was accepted, how could they

insist on selling land and belongings worth more than the amount of default ? Once it seemed as though the whole negotiations would break on the question. We got the Prime Minister to adjourn the House pending further negotiations. I appealed to the Zamindars to do everything with good grace and not to take away with one hand what they gave with the other. And I must say that they responded gracefully. The moral result was superb. In some cases even before the Act came into being the Zamindars began to behave as though the Act was already in force."

And the material results were equally important and considerable. Rent has been reduced on an average by about 25 per cent, in some cases the rate of reduction being as high as 40 to 50 per cent. Tenants have secured rights which make them practically proprietors of their lands, subject only to payment of rent. Their movables and houses are not liable to be attached or sold on account of arrears of rent, and the holding too is not liable to be sold in its entirety, but only such part of it as is considered sufficient to clear the arrears, and even that too for a price which in the opinion of Government is fair. Thus, they will get full value for their land if it is sold by the landlord for arrears of revenue. They are free to sell it or otherwise to transfer it to anyone they like. If, however, they want a distribution of rent as between the portion sold and the portion retained, they have to pay a small fee to the landlord. The landlord is bound to recognize all transfers. Tenants have the right to build a house, plant an orchard, or dig a well on their land. They are not liable to be ejected for arrears of tent. They have thus been made practically independent of the landlord, save only to the extent of having to pay the rent to the landlord which too has been reduced.

There has been another great gain. The question of agricultural income-tax to be imposed on the Zamindars could not be solved without an understanding between Zamindars and Government. The question came up for the first time in Bihar. The understanding, thanks again to the intervention of the Maulana and Babu Rajendraprasad, was arrived at and income-tax was imposed by legislation for the first time in Bihar, and for that matter in the whole of India, and the landlords allowed the legislation to pass with their consent. This imposes on them a burden of some 40 to 50 lakhs of rupees (50,00,000) a year. The

reduction in rent alone has meant to them a loss, and to the tenants a gain, of something like 2 to 2½ crores of rupees (20 to 50 million) per year !

I am grateful to Babu Rajendraprasad for these details, who whilst giving them paid a tribute to the Maulana for his part in these negotiations which I reproduce here :

> "During the talks with the Zamindars and the tenants the Maulana's great acumen and power of persuasion came into full play. He started with a handicap, not being familiar with the details of tenancy law in Bihar. But as the discussions progressed he soon acquired sufficient knowledge of this complicated law and was able to take quick decisions and, what was more, to bring others to his own point of view. The discussions lasted for many days on the first occasion and most points were settled. But the Maulana Saheb had to pay a second visit and stay at Patna for several days again. The agreement between the Congress and Zamindars was thus hammered out after long discussion. We purposely left out the Kisan Sabha from the negotiations, for we did not want to letter their freedom to agitate for more if they thought it necessary. We felt that a legislation with the consent of the Zamindars could be passed quickly and the relief intended could reach the tenants sooner than if legislation had to be passed in the teeth of their opposition. And so it was. The law was passed within a few months of the Ministry taking office, and by the time it resigned rent reduction proceedings sanctioned by the new law had been finished in many places and had made much progress in the greater part of the province. I think Bihar is the only province where relief which the Congress Ministry intended and agreed to give to the tenantry has actually been given. Both in the matter of the tenancy and the income-tax legislation, on occasions when negotiations seemed to be on the breaking-point, the Maulana's great tact, method of approach and power of persuasion saved the situation."

XIV

THE CRISIS

But the Congress was not long destined to enjoy this spell of constructive effort. The international crisis, which had been lowering on the horizon for over a year, burst upon us in September last. It awakened the country to a sudden sense of a reality. We had believed that with the enjoyment of a little bit of provincial autonomy we were marching towards our goal of independence. But the war proved that we did not count; we were still a dependency. Even before the declaration of war Indian troops had been sent to Singapore and Egypt without the consent of the Assembly, and with the declaration of war India was declared a belligerent country, as though India had no voice or will of her own and could have none. The Amendment of the Government of India Act deprived provincial autonomy of the little flicker of life it had, with the result that it became possible for the Central Government to interfere in the day-to-day administration of provinces, and rule by ordinances began. These were portents and enough to entitle the Working Committee of the Congress to call out the ministries and declare the inability of the Congress to offer any co-operation to Government in these war measures. But the Working Committee after long deliberation decided to invite the British Government to declare their war aims in regard to democracy and imperialism, and how they were to apply to India, before they could determine the attitude of the Congress. What happened after this is fresh in the memory of every British and Indian student of affairs.

Britain responded to this first in a censorious and hectoring tone, then by putting the policy of "Divide and Rule" in full operation. No doubt, Gandhi had extended his sympathy to the Allies and even advised the Working Committee to offer unconditional moral co-operation. But the members of the Working Committee, men of the world as they were, had no confidence that they could take the country with them in the acceptance of Gandhiji's advice. And there was nothing dishonourable in asking for obvious assurances. The Dominions during the last World War had insisted on being declared autonomous units of the Commonwealth. As the Maulana in his presidential address said :

"Nations are being plunged into the blood and fire of war. Should we part with reason and reality so completely as not even to ask why this is being done and how this affects our destiny before plunging into this deluge of death and destruction ?"

Events proved that the Working Committee were right in taking the practical man's point of view, and declarations by British statesmen proved that the Working Committee had, by insisting on the declaration of war aims, spared Gandhiji a sad and sudden disillusionment. Gandhiji had taken Britain's war aims for granted. He soon found that his assumption had given more credit to the British Government than they deserved. Needless to say that the Maulana, as an important member of the Working Committee, has had a great part to play in all the Congress decisions since the war began.

History will judge which of the two was honourable or otherwise—the insistence of the Congress on the declaration by the British Government of their war aims, or the way in which the British have responded to it. The policy of "Divide and Rule" broke all efforts at communal unity in the Round Table Conference, and it shattered communal unity which had almost been attained at the Unity Conference in 1933, but never has discord shown itself at its ugliest as during the present crisis. All possible groups and parties whose grievances, fancied or real, could be exploited were invited and ranged on one side in order to show the world that there was a large "non-Congress" Indian than "Congress" India. The Congress undismayed by these tactics, declared its readiness to accept a constitution, framed by such of the representatives of "Congress" or "non-Congress" India as chose to be elected on it on adult or similar suffrage. The Muslim League will not have this, but will have in preference the manipulation of these minorities.

The attitude adopted by the Muslim League during the past few months is still fresh in our memory. Every time the Congress expressed its readiness for a settlement they made it impossible by putting forward the extravagant claim that they speak on behalf of the whole of Muslim India. They made no effort to have the Congress Ministries removed when they were in power, they had never any occasion to appeal to the Governors to use safeguards because there had been no injustice calling for such use, and when the Congress Ministries resigned some of the members of the

Muslim League had even appealed to the Ministries not to resign. But soon after the resignation they staged "a day of deliverance and thanks giving" that that Muslims had been delivered of "majority" rule, they went on making extravagant demands one after another, and now they have beaten all previous records by insisting on a vivi-section of India into "Muslim" India and "Hindu" India. The charge that the Congress Ministries had been anti-Muslim was not only a charge against the Congress but a charge against the Maulana. If the charge against the Congress was true, surely the Maulana as an important member of the Cabinet and of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee had been a traitor to his community in order to retain his position in the Congress. A more preposterous accusation cannot be conceived. But the Maulana examined it in a cool and dispassionate statement of which the most important portions must be reproduced here :

> "And now, when it has given up the Government of the eight provinces of its own choice and free will, what advice has the League President to offer to the Muslims of India ? It is this, that they should march towards the mosques and thank God on their deliverance from the Congress Ministries, which have preferred Duty to Power, and have resigned not only on the issue of India's freedom, but for the rights of all the down-trodden peoples of the East. It is difficult for me even to imagine that any group of Muslims, however at loggerheads with the Congress, would tolerate to be presented to the world in such colours.
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> "The Muslims have a full right to make whatever kind of struggle they deem fit in the cause of their rights and interests. But this is their internal dispute. They should under no circumstances take any step which can possibly be used against the freedom of India. The present attitude of Mr. Jinnah is leading them towards this unfortunate position. It clearly means that the Muslims are being made a stumbling block in the path of India's freedom. I warned the Muslims in 1912 against this. It wounds my heart to the core that the need of reiterating the same has again arisen after twenty-seven years.
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> "And again, after all, why is Mr. Jinnah advising the Mussalmans to celebrate the day of 'deliverance' ? Because

they have been saved from all the 'atrocities of the Congress Ministries.' What was the quantity and quality of the aforesaid 'atrocities' ? In the words of Mr. Jinnah, 'the Congress Ministries were actuated by a decidedly anti-Muslim policy, and the Congress Ministries both in the discharge of the duties of the administration and in the legislatures have done their best to flout Muslim opinion, to destroy Muslim culture and interfered with their religious and social life and trampled their economic and political rights.' Now, if we admit for the time being that the picture which Mr. Jinnah has presented is correct, let us consider what conclusion can be derived from it. The conclusion is patently obvious. The Governments of eight provinces have been interfering in the religious and social life of Mussalmans. They continued to destroy their culture. They trampled down their economic and political rights, and all this havoc was caused not only for a few days; it continued without a break for two and a half years ! What action then did the eighty millions of Muslims of India take under such impossible circumstances ? Only this, that they waited for thirty long months in the hope of the resignations of the Congress Ministries of their own choice and free will. And when this dream of theirs came true, they began to pour their hearts out to the Almighty in a spirit of thanks giving, and like the children of Israel they began to declare that after all their day of deliverance has come. What an honourable picture of the Muslims of India Mr. Jinnah wants to paint before the world !

"It is impossible for me as a Muslim to tolerate for a moment such a degrading picture. I absolutely refuse to believe that the eighty million Muslims of India can be inert and helpless to such an extent that in spite of the fact that the eight Governments of their country continued for two and a half years to interfere with their religion, destroy their culture, trample down their economic and political rights, they only meekly waited for the dawn of the 'day of deliverance.' This is a direct insult to the sense of self-respect of the Muslims of India. It is administering poison to them in place of nectar. The days have long gone when it was possible for men to tolerate such tyrannical Governments. Nowadays, it is impossible for any Provincial Government to carry on the

administration even for a short time after practising the tyrannies attributed to them by Mr. Jinnah, He says that every Congress Ministry did the same without any exception. I affirm that even if a single Ministry had adopted this attitude, the Muslims of India have certainly so much sense of their existence that they would not have waited for any suggestion of Mr. Jinnah to celebıate a day of deliverance. They would have narrowed down the life of such a Mınistry within a short time. The Muslims of India are not made of the stuff called insensibility and cowardice. They could not bear to witness with equanimity 'interference in their social and religious life' and 'trampling down of their economic and political rights' continually for two and a half years.

"It should be remembered in this connection that the accusation of Mr. Jinnah is not that the Congress Ministries have failed to do all that they should have done to better the communal atmosphere, or that in some particular cases the Mussalmans of a certain province have to complain, or that a Ministry committed certain mistakes in administrative matters. If such were the nature of the accusations they might not have been considered unreasonable, and should have been considered unreasonable, and should have been legitimate to be matter for inquiry. But Mr. Jinnah is not a man who would like to climb only to the intermediate steps of a ladder. His charge definitely is that 'the policy of the Congress Ministries was decidedly anti-Muslim.' They continued to 'destroy' Muslim culture, they constantly 'interfered in the religious and social life' and always 'trampled down the political and economic rights of the Mussalmans.'

"I have often declared before and I again do the same, with all possible sense of responsibility, that all these accusations against the Congress Ministries are absolutely baseless. It is a mountain of falsehood to say that the policy of the Congress Ministries was 'decidedly anti-Muslim,' and that they have been 'trampling down the religious, political and economic rights of the Mussalmans.'

"It is the duty of Mr. Jinnah or anyone who chooses to advance such allegations to prove them by any method commonly prevailing in the world. And if he is unable to do so, every sensible man would expect him at least to keep

restraint on his language and pen.

"This is not the occasion to describe my personal attitude towards the complaints of Mussalmans which came to my knowledge during the last two years of the working of the Congress Ministries. I shall do so on some future occasion in detail. However, I may briefly say that during all this period on complaint which came to my knowledge went without being critically inquired into. All my colleagues of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee, the members of the Working Committee, the Ministers of the Provinces and the office-bearers of the Provincial Congress Committee know to what degree my attitude has remained strict and uncompromising in these matters, I was not satisfied with the replies of the Ministers only, and it was not uncommon for me to go through the files of such affairs personally and strictly to examine them on every point.

"In this connection I only wish to say that if even a fraction of the allegations of Mr. Jinnah were correct, I am not a man who would tolerate the Congress Ministries to remain in their seats even for twenty-four hours.

"If Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues think that they are saying these things to benefit the cause of the Muslims, I would tell them in all earnestness that they are doing quite the opposite thing, and they will do a true service to the Muslims of India if they change their direction as early as possible, a true service for which the Indian Muslims are in greatest need today."

XV

AT THE HELM

The candidature of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the acid test of the Congress delegates' nationalism, their faith in Hindu-Muslim unity, and their courage to entrust the destinies of the nation to a Muslim leader at a time of unprecedented crisis. By an overwhelming majority they declared their faith in him. They would have done so in 1939 too, but their having done so in this critical year of our nation's history is especially notable. I had an occasion to ask the Maulana what he meant when he was reported

to have said in a Lahore interview that now that the Parliamentary programme had been put aside he had no difficulty in consenting to be president. "What I meant to say was this," said the Maulana; "the Parliamentary programme is over, I have had my share in the Working Committee's resolution asking the Ministers to resign, and if I am called upon to preside over the next Congress and if I declined, I should be rightly held guilty of having shirked the natural consequences of that resolution. Some time or other, unless the Government revise their attitude, we are sure to have civil disobedience and I did not want anyone to say or feel that because civil disobedience was a certainly I got frightened. And then to have reposed their trust in me in ordinary times would be good enough; but to have done so in a crisis like the present is something that compelled me to respond." I think the Maulana's presidential address and conduct of the proceedings at Ramgarh have more than justified the nation's choice. The address was characteristic of the Maulana : a closely reasoned oration, strictly confined to the question of the hour and studiously refraining from touching any other subject. If the Working Committee at Patna decided to have only one resolution, the Maulana decided to have only one main topic for exhaustive treatment in his address. Not a paragraph in it was superfluous and no words wasted.

It may be worthwhile taking a rapid review of the address which those who would like to study the Maulana's style and manner of presentation should read in full. Even a thing as important as the address of the President of the Indian National Congress is not read in England. Reuter sends a bare summary and papers like *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* dispose of it in a summary of thirty to forty words, as indeed they did the Maulana's address.

But to summarize the address. At the very outset the Maulana refers to the new departure in the Congress resolutions since the year 1936—a departure with which he completely identifies himself. It may be noted that even in 1912, when the *Al Hilal* was started, the Maulana emphasized the importance of a study of international topics which were attracting considerable attention. When, therefore, Pandit Nehru as President of the Congress in 1936 suggested action on such world topics it appealed most strongly to the Maulana. "Probably in the history of the

Congress, the 1936 session at Lucknow marked a new ideological phase, when the Congress passed a long resolution on the international situation and placed its viewpoint clearly and categorically before the public. After this a consideration of the international situation, and a resolution thereon, became an essential and integral part of the annual declarations of the Congress. Thus, this decision on this subject was arrived at and placed before the world with full deliberation. These resolutions embodied at one and the same time two declarations to the world. Firstly, we stated what I have described as a new ideology in Indian politics, that we could not remain in isolation from the political events of the outside world, even in our present state of helplessness. It was essential that while we forged our way ahead and fashioned our future, we must not confine ourselves merely to our own surroundings, but should keep a vigilant watch on the conditions of the outside world. Innumerable changes in the world have brought countries and nations nearer to one another, so that the waves of thought and action, rising in one corner of the world, flow and produce immediate reactions in other places. It is, therefore, impossible today for India to consider her problems while confining herself within her own four walls. It is inevitable that events in the outside world should have their repercussions in India: it is equally inevitable that our decisions and the conditions prevailing in India should affect the rest of the world. It was this consciousness and belief which brought about our decisions. We declared by these resolutions against reactionary movements like Fascism and Nazism, which were directed against democracy and individual and national freedom. These movements were gaining strength day by day, and India regarded this as the greatest danger to world progress and peace. India's head and heart were with those peoples who were standing up for democracy and freedom and resisting this wave of reaction."

India's fight, he makes it clear, is not against the British people but against British Imperialism, as it is also against Nazism :

> "But while we were considering the dangers arising from Fascism and Nazism, it was impossible for us to forget the older danger which has been proved to be infinitely more fatal to the peace and freedom of nations than these new

dangers, and which has in fact supplied the basis for this reaction. I refer to British Imperialism. We are not distant spectators of this imperialism, as we are of the new reactionary movements. It has taken possession of our house and dominates over us. It was for this reason that we stated in clear terms that if new entanglements in Europe brought about war, India which has been debarred from exercising her will and making free decisions, will not take any part in it. She could only consider this question when she had acquired the right of coming to decision according to her own free will and choice.

"India cannot endure the prospect of Nazism and Fascism, but she is even more tired of British Imperialism. If India remains deprived of her natural right to freedom, this would clearly mean that British Imperialism continued to flourish with all its traditional characteristics, and under such conditions India would on no account be prepared to lend a helping hand for the triumph of British Imperialism. This was the second declaration which was constantly emphasized through these resolutions. These resolutions were repeatedly passed from the Lucknow session onwards till August 1939, and are known by the name of 'War Resolutions.'"

Also :

"But it is not a question of the desire or of the measure of the desire of the British Government. The straight and simple question is of India's right; whether she is entitled to determine her own fate or not. On the answer to this question depends the answers to all other questions of the day. This question forms the foundation-stone of the Indian problems; India will not allow it to be removed, for if it is displaced the whole structure of Indian nationalism will collapse.

"So far as the question of war is concerned our position is quite clear. We see the face of British Imperialism as clearly now as we did in the last war, and we are not prepared to assist in the triumph by participating in war. Our case is crystal clear. We do not wish to see British Imperialism triumphant and stronger, and thus lengthen the period of our own subjection to it. We absolutely refuse to do so. Our

way lies patently in the opposite direction."

Lastly :

"Since war began several members of the British Cabinet have tried to make the world believe that the old order of British Imperialism has ended, and that today the British nation has no other aims except those of peace and justice. Which country could have more warmly acclaimed such a declaration than India ? But the fact is that in spite of these declarations British Imperialism stands in the way of peace and justice today exactly as it did before the war. The Indian demand was the touchstone for all such claims. They were so tested and found to be counterfeit and untrue."

The portion of his address on Hindu-Muslim unity and the minority problem is likely to endure in history. Ever since he started his weekly *Al Hilal* in 1912 he has waged unrelenting war against the policy and efforts to divide Hindu and Muslims, and he declares in his address :

"I would remind my co-religionists that today I stand exactly where I stood in 1912 when I addressed them on this issue. I have given thought to all those innumerable occurrences which have happened since then; my eyes have watched them, my mind has pondered over them. These events did not merely pass me by; I was in the midst of them, a participant, and I examined every circumstance with care. I cannot quarrel with my own convictions; I cannot stifle the voice of my conscience. I repeat today what I have said throughout this entire period, that the ninety millions of Muslims of India have no other right course of action than the one to which I invited them in 1912."

He scouts the idea that the Muslims are in a minority and that the democratic institutions in India would therefore jeopardize their interests and existence :

"Politically speaking, the word minority does not mean just a group that is numerically smaller, and therefore entitled to

special protection. It means a group that is so small in number and so lacking in other qualities that give strength that it has no confidence in its own capacity to protect itself from the much larger group that surrounds it. It is not enough that the group should be relatively the smaller, but that it should be absolutely so small as to be incapable of protecting its interests. Thus, this is not merely a question of numbers; other factors count also. If a country has two major groups numbering one million and two millions respectively, it does not necessarily follow that because one is half the other, therefore, it must call itself politically a minority and consider itself weak."

Also :

"Full eleven centuries have passed by since then. Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years, Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism so also we can say with equal pride that we are Indians and follow Islam. I shall enlarge this orbit still further. The Indian Christian is equally entitled to say with pride that he is an Indian and is following a religion of India, namely, Christianity."

Lastly :

"Do we, Indian Mussalmans, view the free India of the future with suspicion and distrust or with courage and confidence ?
"If we view it with fear and suspicion, then undoubtedly we have to follow a different path. No present declaration, no promise for the future, no constitutional safeguards can be a remedy for our doubts and fears. We are then forced to tolerate the existence of a third power. This third power is already entrenched here and has no intention of withdrawing and, if we follow this path of fear, we must needs look forward to its continuance. But if we are convinced that for us fear and doubt have no place, and that we must view the future with courage and confidence in ourselves, then our

course of action becomes absolutely clear. We find ourselves in a new world, which is free from the dark shadows of doubt, vacillation, inaction and apathy, and where the light of faith and determination, action and enthusiasm never fails. The confusion of the times, the ups and downs that come our way, the difficulties that beset our thorny path, cannot change the direction of our steps. It becomes our bounden duty then to march with assured steps to India's national goal.

"I arrived at this definite conclusion without the least hesitation, and every fibre of my being revolted against the former alternative. I could not bear the thought of it. I could not conceive it possible for a Mussalman to tolerate this, unless he has rooted out the spirit of Islam from every corner of his being."

So much for the Mussalmans. As for the British, who are not tired of describing the obstacle of the communal question as an insuperable one. he declares :

"We could attach no greater importance to it than to make it the first condition for the attainment of our national goal. The Congress has always held this belief; no one can challenge this fact. It has always held to two basic principles in this connection, and every step was taken deliberately with this in view.

"(I) Whatever constitution is adopted for India, there must be the fullest guarantees in it for the rights and interests of minorities.

"(2) The minorities should judge for themselves what safeguards are necessary for the protection of their rights and interests. The majority should not decide this. Therefore, the decision in this respect must depend upon the consent of the minorities and not on a majority vote . . .

"The manner in which the Congress has dealt with this problem today in connection with the Constituent Assembly throws a flood of light on these two principles and clarifies them. The recognized minorities have a right, if they so please, to choose their representatives by their votes. Their representatives will not have to rely upon the votes of any other community except their own. So far as the question of

the rights and the interests of the minorities is concerned, the decision will not depend upon the majority of votes in the Constituent Assembly. It will be subject to the consent of the minority. If unanimity is not achieved on any question, then an impartial tribunal, to which the minorities have also consented, will decide the matter. This last proviso is merely in the nature of a provision for a possible contingency, and is most unlikely to be required. If a practical proposal is made, there can be no objection to it."

Even at the eleventh hour the Maulana wonders if an understanding between Britain and India is impossible: "Was it impossible," he asks in his characteristic way, "that two great peoples of the world, who had been tied together by the course of events as rulers and ruled, should create a new relationship between them, based on reason, justice and peace? If that had been possible, the sorrows born of word war would have given place to a new-born hope; and the new order of reason and justice would have ushered in a new dawn. If British people could have proudly said to the world today that they had added a new example to history, what a vast and unparalleled triumph this would have been for humanity? Certainly, this was not an impossibility, but it was an amazingly difficult thing to do."

The Congress met in exceptionally difficult circumstances. Ceaseless downpours of rain made proceedings on the first day impossible. But the Maulana, reckless of wind and weather, opened the Congress with a very brief speech and announced that the resolution and the amendments would be moved the next morning. Even then the skies had by no means a less threatening aspect, but the Congress met with fifty thousand people again ready to face rain and storm with a will and a cheer. The Maulana would have been justified in rushing through the amendments, some of which did not deserve permission to be moved, in view of the utter lack of support they had in the Subjects Committee. But he gave all the movers a long rope, and in about four hours brought the proceedings to a close. Nothing could have been more expeditious, more telling, more significant of the earnestness of the people. All amendments pressing for closing the doors to a settlement or for the immediate launching of the Civil Disobedience Campaign were rejected by an overwhelming majority

and the sole resolution that was adopted was passed by the delegates knowing that Gandhiji had laid down most inexorable conditions for the standing of the movement. "You cannot make me your general on your terms," he had said to them. "Know, therefore, that I will insist on my conditions. They are inexorable, and if you do not observe them, I will automatically withdraw. Unless you accept my conditions, unless you have faith in them as you have in me, you should not think of going to jail. You must understand that you have to deal with a dangerous man who may land you in unexpected situations. Compromise is part and parcel of my nature. I will go to the Viceroy fifty times if I feel like it." But with eyes open and with full understanding they passed the resolution with acclamations which were echoed by the surrounding hills. The text of the resolution is given as an appendix at the end of the book.

XVI

THE PROSPECT

"Was it impossible that two great nations of the world should create a new relationship between them based on reason, justice and peace?" That was the question asked by the Congress President in the course of the speech that was summarized in the preceding chapter. One would like to ask again, "Is it impossible?"

It should not be if the blunders already made could be repaired.

The initial blunder was made by the Viceroy by inviting representatives of all possible groups and interests, without regard for the fact that many of these groups were no real minorities. The whole minority problem is a creation of the British Government, and is the culmination of a studied prosecution of the policy of "Divide and Rule" over a period of wellnigh four decades. The Viceroy has had several talks with the President of the Muslim League, but he has never thought fit to have a talk with the representatives of other Muslim groups—the nationalist Muslims, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Ahrars, the Shias and the Momins.

And the Viceroy's blunder has been repeated by other British

statesmen, including Lord Zetland, who in a speech which professed to be conciliatory and to declare to the world that the door for negotiations was still open, added insult to injury by adding a few more interests, which were calculated to hinder a liberal settlement.

However, the Congress tried to meet the difficulties, whether real or imaginary, by suggesting the summoning of a Constituent Assembly representing all communities in their exact proportion. It thus cut the Gordian knot of the minorities question. For the Constituent Assembly is expected to represent not only the Congress mind, not only the Muslim League mind, but also the Princes' mind and other non-Congressmen's minds, if all these will care to be elected on it. Apart from what the Congress may say—and the Congress cannot possibly lower its flag and reduce its demand—it is for the representatives of non-Congress voters to ask for anything less than independence if that will satisfy them.

It should be remembered that the demand for a Constituent Assembly does not come as a bolt from the blue today, nor is it made because of the crisis arising out of India being declared a belligerent by the British Government without reference to the provinces. The suggestion for a Constituent Assembly was first made by Dr. Ansari on behalf of the Congress in a statement issued by him in May 1934, with reference to the controversy arising out of the so-called Communal Award: "The Congress made its attitude towards the communal problem clear in its resolutions from time to time since the Nehru Committee's recommendations have lapsed. The Congress knows that while a large number of Hindus and Sikhs have taken strong exception to the Communal Award a considerable section of Mussalmans, Harijans and Christians have accepted it for so long as an agreed substitute is not found. The Congress will always strive to find a national solution of the question, but in my opinion such *a solution cannot be found except by a Constituent Assembly convened to frame the national Constitution*, and until then the question of acceptance or rejection of the mode or proportion of representation as contained in the Communal Award does not arise. *It would not be dignified for any self-respecting people to ask any outsider to decide what is purely a domestic matter*, nor would any such decision succeed in satisfying all." (Italics mine.)

The resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the so-called Communal Award, passed in June 1934, also emphasized the necessity for a Constituent Assembly :

> "The only satisfactory alternative to the White Paper is a Constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage or as near it as possible, with power, if necessary, to the important minorities to have their representatives elected exclusively by the electors belonging to such minorities."

After this came the famous controversy between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Hindu and Muslim communalists about five years ago, when in reply to Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that a Constituent Assembly was the only proper body to decide both the political and communal issues.

It is worthy of note that neither the Muslim League nor any of the other minorities then raised any objection to the resolution of the Working Committee quoted above or to the proposal of the Constituent Assembly as the only competent body to frame a satisfactory constitution. The Congress demand is thus neither new nor arises out of a desire to exploit the international crisis. The only honourable course for Britain is to withdraw and to leave India absolutely free to draw up its constitution. The seed of the communal disagreement was sown by the introduction of communal electorates. It does not lie in the mouth of the British rulers to say to India that before she can be trusted to arrange her own affairs she must uproot the poison-tree which they themselves have planted, and nourished. I can only quote here the words of Mr. Lionel Curtis, than which it would be difficult to find a more devastating reflection :

> "The concession of this principle (of separate communal electorates) when electoral institutions were inaugurated a few years ago is the greatest blunder ever committed by the British Government of India. I believe that if this principle is perpetuated, we shall have saddled India with a new system of caste, which will eat every year more deeply into her life. So long as it remains, India will never attain to the unity of

nationhood. The longer it remains, the more difficult will it be to uproot it, till in the end it will only be eradicated at the cost of civil war. To enable India to attain nationhood is the trust laid on us, and in conceding to the establishment of communal representation we have, I add, been false to that trust."

But it is said that the Muslim League is opposed to the demand, and that it has now asked for a partition of India. All that the Congress demands is that even the claim should be made by properly elected representatives of Muslims in a Constituent Assembly. The Maulana in a talk described the Muslim League proposal as fantastic. He said : "Those who make the proposal are flying in the face of history, ethnology and the tendency of modern times. When they say we are two nations they beg the question. The ancestors of most of us were common, and I for one do not accept the theory of a superior or inferior race or of different races. Mankind is one race, and we have to live in harmony with one another. Providence brought us together over a thousand years ago. We have fought, but so do blood-brothers fight. So did Englishmen and Englishmen fight—as in the Wars of the Roses. But they did not insist on living as separate nations. During the thousand years we have reacted on one another to our mutual spiritual, cultural, moral and material benefit. They want to put the hands of the clock back by centuries. No, it is no use trying to emphasize the differences. For that matter no two human beings are alike. Every lover of peace must emphasize similarities. Diversities but lend colour to the essential similarities. What therefore I detest is the communal approach to the national problem. Nowhere in the world has a national problem been approached on communal lines. In a future constitution determined by India's representatives, the Hindu or the Mussalman will have to think of his position and interests not as a Hindu or a Mussalman, but as a peasant or a Zamindar, as a labourer or a capitalist and so on. Religious freedom will be one of the fundamental rights under any free constitution, but whatever that constitution, it will be nothing worth unless it reflects equality of opportunity or economic freedom for all. But why must I argue this ? Let Mr. Jinnah get himself elected by the Muslims and come to the Constituent Assembly and press his

demands on behalf of the Indian Muslim world."

But events have moved fast since the Muslim League passed its resolution for a partition of India at Lahore about a couple of months ago The resolution had shocked the bulk of the Muslim world so much that the Muslims outside the Leage resolved to meet in conference at Delhi at the end of April to voice their protest against the anti-national and anti-Muslim proposal. This conference was attended by representatives of seven principal Muslim organizations and by several thousand Muslims from all parts of the country.

The president of this conference, Mr. Alla Buksh, examined in detail the Muslim League scheme of "two Indias" in all its aspects and effectively exposed its disastrous and anti-national character, and appealed to the Muslims promptly and authoritatively to repudiate the charge that the "Muslims of India appear as the main obstacle in the way of India's progress as a whole." The conference passed resolutions dissociating itself from the Pakistan Scheme, supporting the demand for a Constituent Assembly, and repudiating the charge that the Muslims were opposed to India's freedom.

The British Government have to realize that the solution of the communal problem, which they describe as a condition precedent, will only come *after* they have parted with power. Jinnah Saheb said to a *Daily Mail* correspondent : "To be logical, Mr. Gandhi should require the immediate withdrawal of 'the humiliating British bayonet' so that the people of India could settle their own manner of self-determination in complete freedom." He either does not know or has not cared to know that not only has Gandhiji declared this times without number, but he has gone even further and said that he would "any day prefer Muslim rule to British rule," and even if there was a civil war, "it would last for a few days or months, and we would settle down to business," and "immediately British rule is really ended we shall grow as never before, inspite of all forebodings."

This question of the Princes should offer no obstacle at all. If "independence" or "self-determination" is their bugbear, let them be isolated from British India. There is no analogy between Ulster and Muslim India, for there is no such thing as a separate Muslim India. But there may be some analogy between Ulster and the Princes' India, and if there is let the Indian Ulster be

separated and British India have self-determination.

All of these alternatives have been offered by the Congress, but Britain has ignored them. It is said that Britain is faced with an unprecedentedly grave international crisis. It is a pity that Britain does not realize that she is faced with a grave crisis so far as India is concerned, for she is being weighed in the balance and found wanting. She has been making promises since 1917, but the performance is being evaded by the obstacles which I hope I have shown to be imaginary.

When I had my talk with the Maulana in Calcutta on these matters, his heart was sore that Britain had not abandoned the superior and patronizing attitude even in a crisis like the present. Gandhiji had met the Viceroy two or three times; he had on the last occasion even expressed an earnest desire that the Viceroy and he should not separate until they had arrived at a settlement. But what had happened ? Gandhiji left Delhi almost immediately after a single talk with the Viceroy. As against this, what had happened in the past ? When in 1921 Gandhiji met Lord Reading—even whilst the campaign of non-co-operation was going on—they had nothing less than six long interviews. In 1931, when Lord Irwin and Gandhiji met, they had even more interviews, and it looked as though their talks were not going to end. They met in the day, they met in the night even up to the small hours of the morning until they forged a gentlemen's agreement. That was because Lord Irwin had instructions to bring about a settlement. Lord Linlithgow had evidently no such plenary powers. What happened in Ireland ? The most violent crimes had taken place, there was no knowing when the mutual bloodbath would end, when Mr. Lloyd George invited the violent rebels to a conference, sat from day-to-day with them and hammered out an honourable settlement. What happened in Egypt ? How often did they invite Saad Zaghlul Pasha to London inspite of breakdowns, inspite of the most violent demonstrations after those breakdowns ? What is the difficulty in India ? Let it not be said that Britain knows no force but brute force.

So far as the Congress is concerned, so far as Gandhiji is concerned, no attempt is being spared to confine the struggle strictly to non-violence, and Gandhiji as the self-appointed general of the Satyagraha army is trying to avoid even disobedience insofar as it may be possible, and when it becomes

inevitable to regulate it so that it may not embarrass the British Government. But the situation may get out of his hands, and he may be unable to stem the tide. Then, as he has said, Heaven help India and Heaven help Britain.

44

ABUL KALAM AZAD

L.N. Sarin

Abul Kalam Azad was in some respects an antithesis of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. If inferior to Jinnah in acuteness of intellect he was superior to him in catholicity of mind. Sir Syed Ahmad was a social reformer of the Muslim community but moved in the backwaters of political conservatism. He favoured British rule in India, opposed the growing voice of nationalism and disseminated the seeds of communal distrust and exclusiveness among his co-religionists. Jinnah did not always support the British rule, disliked the colour complex of Col. Blimps but made no contributions to further the cause of nationalism and weakened all popular fronts by creating a separate communal force as a foil to the nationalist voice of the progressive forces. Azad was cast in an altogether different mould. His angle of vision was different to the angles of vision of either Sir Syed Ahmad Khan or Mohammad Ali Jinnah. If a devout Muslim in his relationship to the things spiritual he was a loyal Indian in his relationship to the things temporal. It never occurred to him that the Muslims were a separate nation and needed a separate homeland for their existence and prosperity. Nor did his mind move in such a narrow groove to find Muslim salvation in British patronage. He viewed political problems from a political angle and confined religious claims to the sphere of religion.

Born in Mecca in 1888 he was educated at the Al Azhar University of Cairo where he gave early indications of his

precocity. His commentary on the holy Koran is recognised the best treatise on the subject. While narrow-minded bigotry spread the venom of hate and fanaticism, Maulana Azad – a true Muslim—interpreted Islam as an instrument of service and selflessness. It is unfortunate that religious divines rarely interpret religion correctly. They emphasise its mutilated form by ignoring the purity of its spirit. How religion was exploited for political ends and how caste was invoked for personal advancement were common complaints of non-sectarian minds who never gave up their ambition to raise public life to higher level by purifying it of the pernicious influence of caste and creed.

The genesis and growth of the Muslim League was a triumph of Muslim communalism over Indian nationalism. Jinnah, however, did not diminish the stature of Abul Kalam Azad by calling him a "Muslim show-boy of the Congress." On the other hand, he betrayed his own asperity and catankerous spite that are associated with small minds and petty outlooks. Nor was Azad humiliated when misguided young men, unhinged by communal stupidity, manhandled him and put a garland of shoes round his neck at the Aligarh railway station ! While Azad, a scholar and a theologian, pitied the decline of Muslim culture, the world saw in his tolerance a largeness of heart that does not lose grip over itself even in most provocative circumstances.

In his speech at Ramgarh he said, "I am a Muslim and I am proud of the fact. Islam's splendid traditions of thirteen hundred years are my inheritance. The teachings and history of Islam, its arts, letters and civilization are my wealth and fortune. It is my duty to protect them. . . But in addition to these sentiments I have others also which the realities and conditions of my life have forced upon me. The spirit of Islam does not come in the way of these sentiments. It helps and guides me forward. I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity which is Indian nationality." Azad's life was governed by the twin ambition to serve his community by first serving his country without losing his Muslim identity in the Indian synthesis that absorbed him.

It is interesting to draw a comparison between Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Abul Kalam Azad, both of whom discarded communal attires for national garbs and remained steadfast champions of the cause of their country's freedom. Azad's scholarship and mastery of several languages stood in vivid contrast to Rafi

Ahmad's paucity of knowledge and lack of interest in literary pursuits. While Azad drew his inspiration from the book lore, Rafi Ahmad learnt about life and its problems from a never-ending contact with human beings. Goethe said there were two kinds of education that a man received—one imparted by others and the other that he gave himself. Azad got his education from others, Kidwai educated himself. In profundity of thought Azad was superior to Kidwai but in fecundity of ideas Kidwai easily excelled him. Azad's massive intellect remained ponderous in the face of administrative problems requiring quick decision; Kidwai agile mind moved like a sharp rapier and cut the gordian knot without any difficulty. Azad was not sure of the advisability of Police action in Hyderabad which when taken proved successful; Kidwai saw the salvation of Kashmere in the lightening action of the Sadr-i-Riyasat and events proved the accuracy of his judgment by putting an end to the dismal intrigues of Sheikh Abdullah. Azad was a faithful colleague but Kidwai was a better administrator and a superior tactician.

Rajendra Prasad saw in Azad "an embodiment of our culture", but to Nehru he "was a luminous mind." If to some he appeared "first and last an educationist", to Aruna Asaf Ali he was "a gracious friend." Those who disputed his political resourcefulness in a crisis never disputed his profound learning and deep scholarship. Azad's achievements were neither spectacular nor brilliant but it would go to his eternal credit that at a time when communal leaders smeared Indian politics with litanies of hate, Azad remained a rock of nationalism and living example of the highest traditions of Islam that got their inspiration from amity, tolerance, goodwill and magnanimity of mind.

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MAULANA AZAD'S CONCEPT OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION

S.A. ANSARI

"The spectacle that India presents today is a strange contrast between integration and lack of it. We find that casteism, linguism and religious communalism are blocking the way of national solidarity. Out of these three religious communalism has a fairly long history behind it which, though it might seem to be dead and gone, still dominates the minds of many people as a living memory. Religious communalism is the most serious obstacle in the way of national solidarity. It has various facets and conflicting implications. But its most dangerous manifestation is the politics based on Hinduism or Islam. It is interesting that there are many common areas that produce similar effects on the minorities. The Hindu communalism is pushing and the Muslim communalism is pulling the Muslims towards isolation."[1]

Both agree that Muslims should not be allowed to become an integral part of the Indian nation but should be forced out of the field of common national life into the position of a political minority. Both aim at making the Muslims a protected minority. In such circumstances the most important and urgent problem of our national integration is to prevent Muslims from drifting away from the mainstream of national life, which is harmful not only to the nation, but also to be community itself.

It is gratifying to note that a serious thought is being given to resolve communal tensions at all levels of Government and

political parties, but unfortunately the approach that is being generally adopted in this regard gives rise to the apprehension that the disease has not been rightly diagnosed and, therefore, the treatment that is prescribed will prove to be not only unless but dangerous. Under such circumstances Maulana Azad's concept of National integration seems to be more practical and pragmatic and hence more useful.

UNIQUE PERSONALITY

Of the leading personalities who have left a deep impact on the minds of the Indian Muslims, Maulana Azad stands out unique. His contribution to the Muslim life and thought is tremendous. In the political field, his achievement was comparatively more definite, positive and permanent. The work of bringing the old and the new educated classes of Muslims closer to each other was performed with greater success by Maulana Azad who represented a trend of composite nationalism and till his death he was champion of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Azad started his political career as a religious leader (*Alim*). His early career (1906-20) was governed by his religious teachings. His nationalism was uncompromisingly Islamic implying non-cooperation with non-Muslims including the British. Temperamentally Azad, was a rebel and so he could not remain a blind follower either of his father or of Sir Syed.

Very soon he realized that the political politics persued by Sir Syed, i.e., of preventing the Muslims from participating in political activities and consistently following a pro-British course, had outlived their usefulness. Moreover, in his early age he had the opportunity to travel from Calcutta to some Arabian countries along with his father. There he witnessed strong anti-British feelings which created a deep impact on the mind of young Azad.[2] Therefore, he decided to abandon the pro-British strategy of Sir Syed and started advocating that the Muslims should participate in the political life of the country.

"AL-HILAL" STARTED

He decided to uproot the idea of loyalty to the British Crown from the minds of the Indian Muslims and for this purpose he

started a weekly called "*Al-Hilal*", from Calcutta from June 1912. The very first issue of this weekly acted as an explosive in the Muslim world and compelled them to consider seriously whether there was not some thing radically wrong in their way of thinking ? The inspiring message that Azad gave to the Muslims of India through *Al-Hilal* had two main objectives : "Firstly, to revive in them the true spirit of religion and to recognize their religious and social life, and secondly, to infuse in them the spirit of freedom as enjoined upon them by the Islam." In this stage of Azad he can be regarded as an advocate of religious nationalism. On 8th September, 1912, in an article entitled "*Al-Hilal Ka Maqsad Aur Political Taleem*" (*Al Hilal's* Aim and political education). Azad clearly states that he refuses to separate his political views from the framework of religion and asserted that Islam brought an exalted and all inclusive social order for mankind. He added : "It is regrettable that Muslims (of today) have not seen Islam as its zenith. If they had, they would not be bowing their heads in subjection to the Hindus."[3] He declared unequivocally that the aim of *Al-Hilal* was to exhort Muslims to follow the book of Allah and the Shariat of the Prophet.

"ZEALOUS MUSLIM"

Thus Azad started as a "Zealous Muslim," and as an uncompromising upholder of pure Islam. During this phase of Azad's political career, he was very much overwhelmed by Islam and he wanted to convince Muslims that "in cultural, political or other matters, Muslims ought to be Muslims." Asked by a Muslim journalist if Muslims should join non-Muslims in political matters, he answered, "Islam is so exalted a religion that its followers are not constrained to ape the Hindus for the formulation of their political policies."[4]

He did not stop at this and added that their (Muslims) nationality is not inspired by the racial or geographical exclusivity, it transcends all man-made barriers. Europe may be inspired by the concepts of nations and nationhood, but Muslims can seek inspiration for self-awareness only from God and Islam."

Distinguishing this theory of nationalism he wrote that the non-Muslims can, "like other nations, revive their self-awareness of the basis of secular nationalism, but it is indeed not possible

for Muslims."[5] During this period Azad firmly believed that the Muslims were the leaders of the world and if they would submit to God the entire world would submit to them.

Azad continued to profess and preach this brand of religious nationalism upto 1920. His policies during this period were, "lack of trust in the British Government and non-cooperation with the non-Muslims." He used to consider himself as a citizen of the International Islamic Brotherhood which was then known as the "Turkish Khilafat." Thus upto 1920, Azad was so over-whelmed by religion that his political perspective was blurred.

After *Al-Hilal*, Azad started another weekly called "*Al-Balagh*" in 1916. Through the writings in these weeklies Azad not only infused a new spirit in the intellectual and literary like the Indian Muslims, but also led to their religious and political awakening. Though this period of Azad's political life can be regarded as a romantic phase, he was successful in creating a consciousness of current political affairs and desire for political freedom among the Muslims. One important thing which is to be noted is that Azad, unlike other Ulema, firmly believed that independence can be achieved by Indian themselves and not with the help of any "Foreign Powers." Secondly, Azad was anti-British mainly because he thought that the Britishers were the enemies of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, he launched a campaign against Britishers. In short, during this first phase of his political career, Azad consistently followed the policies of a Muslim Nationalist.

After 1920 a radical change came in his thinking. He was externed from Bengal under the Defence Ordinance and he had to stay in Ranchi where afterwards he was placed under internment. During his forced stay at Ranchi, the Massacre of Jalianwala Bagh and the imposition of Martial Law throughout the Punjab had set the whole country afire. Muslims were particularly wild with rage on account of the behaviour of the British and her allies with the Turkish Empire. An outcome of these events was the "Khilafat Movement."

Maulana Azad wanted to take advantage of Khilafat Movement in order order to bring Muslims and Hindus together so that both the communities could fight shoulder to shoulder against the British rule. For this purpose Azad took the consent of Gandhiji, who in turn persuaded the Congress to make the Khilafat demand as a part of the national demand. This

was the second big success of Azad's political life. Azad's speeches and writings during the days of Khilafat Movement created a sense of national fervour and national unity. "Muslims en-mass joined the Congress for the first time since its inception and the general slogan, *Hindu Muslim ki-jai*, was heard every where."

Though Azad was successful in bringing Hindus and Muslims together the attempt was not based on the consideration of a common nationality (composite nationality). To Azad it was a temporay co-operation in order to attain freedom and to drive the Britishers out of the country. Mustafa Kamal Ata-Turk, himself a Turk, abolished Khilafat. Arab Nationalism appealing to all Arabs on the basis of language and common history and culture regardless of radial, denominational affiliation also asserted itself. During this period Azad visited Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. This greatly influenced Azad and his notion of nationality changed drastically.

INDIAN NATIONALIST

In the post-1920 period Azad ceased to be a Muslim nationalist. "He accepted the fundamental principles of Arab and Turkish (secular and territorial) nationalism and vigorously applied them to the political situation in India."[6] Thus, after the World War I and the abolition of Khilafat Maulana Azad's views radically changed. He renounced his Islamic Nationalism and embraced Indian Nationalism and accepted secular and territorial national philosophy. "The votary of Muslim Nationalism had come under the spell of the New Turkish Nationalism and forsaken all earlier beliefs and pronounced his faith in a joint (Hindu-Muslims) nationalism in India, which according to Azad was a pre-requisite of winning independence from the British."

Maulana's address to the All India Khilafat Conference at Kanpur on 24th December, 1925 is a testimony of his radically changed views. When Kamal Ata-Turk abolished the Khilafat, Maulana did not express a word of regret. This itself shows that Maulana was no more a religious nationalist. "Throughout the later period of the Khilafat Movement, Maulana Azad looked upon it basically as a struggle for uniting Hindus and Muslims against the British Imperialism."[7]

'UMMA-I-WAHIDA'

Azad attached great importance to communal harmony. While addressing a provincial Assembly of the Khilafat Movement at Agra on 25th October, 1971, he referred to Hindu-Muslim co-operation as the covenant of the Prophet Mohammed, entered between the Muslims and other residents of Madina for the purpose of establishing a working alliance for the common defence. Azad used the key phrase "*Umma-Wahida*" for a "Joint-Hindu Muslim" Nation. The impact of Arab Nationalism was over-whelming on Azad.

Delivering an address to the All India Khilafat Conference on 29th December, 1925, he said : "like India the population of Syria is also heterogenous. There are Muslims, Christians of different sects and Druze tribe in Syria, who for centuries used to cut each others throat. The mention of the notorious crusade is enough to conjure up floods of blood that once swept over the Middle East. Nevertheless all Syrians are today united for the liberation of their country and their slogan is—Religion is for God and the home land for every one."

Comparing Syrians with Indians, Azad remarked, "Unfortunately from the viewpoint of education and political maturity, even our most advanced classes are not prepared to go that far (to the extent of accepting the implications of Arab National slogans). Religious bigotory, class friction and communal prejudices are still blocking the way of national progress."[8] "If Syrians could think of composite nationalism, so could Indians" pleaded Azad.

Azad used the preamble of the covenant to bring home to the Muslims his own version of composite and united Nationalism. Azad interpreted "*Umama-i-Wahida*" as one nation. He believed that inspite of religious, racial and other differences. India is one nation. The composite nationalism for Azad was not an idea based on a temporary "*Moahida*" as believed by some 'Ulema'. He aimed at the creation of an indivisible and permanent nation (*Umma-i Wahida*), comprising of all Indians irrespective of caste, creed or religion. During the course of his historic Presidential Address at the Ramgarh Congress Session, Azad while proudly declaring his being a Muslim with 1300 years glorious traditions admitted, "But with all these feelings, I possess another instinct

which the realities of my life have created and from which the spirit of Islam cannot check me. It is that I am proud of a feeling that *I am an Indian and member of the indivisible and unified nationality of India.*"

This indivisible and united nationality or composite nationality of India was a "*Umma-i-Wahida*" for Azad. Thus Azad dreamt of a composite nationalism with complete harmony among all the sections of the people, while relating their individuality. Maulana Azad was essentially a religious man but by conviction he was rational and modern. He tried to reconcile religion with reason without injuring either. Maulana's religious insight helped him to formulate his views on unity and integration.

He brought a strictly rational and logical attitude of mind to bear on all questions and refused to take anv thing for granted. He clearly differentiated between what he calls the "vital roots of religion" from its "innumerable branches and leaves." He believed that the root of all the religions is one. He proved that all religious teaching consists of two parts; one giving the eternal principles, i.e., the sources of religion, and the other external form. The first is the principal thing (root), whereas the second is subordinate (branches). The first is called the faith by the Quran and the second is called the rules of conduct or Shariah.

Maulana said that the religions of the world differ not in the principal thing, i.e., eternal truth, but they differ in the rules of conduct, ways of worship, etc. This difference was inevitable, because the object of religion is the well being of mankind and as the conditions of mankind change with the time and country, every religion is different in its outward form. The outward form reflects the spirit of the age and country in which it was taught, and it suited that age and country. Thus, Maulana believed in the unity of religion, in the unity of God and the unity of brotherhood. Unity of brotherhood means that in the multifarious diversity of mankind is hidden its unity.

RELEVANT AND IRRELEVANT

To conclude, Maulana Azad's earlier writings which ennunciate religious nationalism are least helpful and useful in bringing about integration in the country. Fortunately, Maulana himself renounced his stand. But what Azad expressed after 1920 is

extremely relevant and useful. His ideas of the unity of religion may be debated as an operative basis of national integration but since Indian history has been a question of religious spiritualism, this may help the common people. Here Gandhiji and Azad stand on a par. What is of great significance in Azad is his address to the Indian National Congress in 1940 where he clearly advocated the ideas of common citizenship.

It is to be noted that the reactionaries or Jamaaat-e-Islami is more inspired by the early writings of Maulana Azad. It is the duty of the secularists to reject the earlier phase as did the Maulana himself and make an effective use of Maulana's ideas of common citizenship based on synthetic nationalism.

Notes and References

1. Dr. S. Abid Hussain, *Destiny of Indian Muslims.* See Preface.
2. D.G. Tendulkar, *Abdul Gaffar Khan.*
3. Abul Kalam Azad, *Mazamin-e-Azad*, p. 14.
4. *Al-Hilal*, Weekly, dated 8th September 1912.
5. Abul Kalam, *Mazamin-e-Azad*, pp. 22 to 26.
6. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 413.
7. M.A. Karandikar, *Islam in India's Transition to Modernity*, p. 239.
8. Abul Kalam Azad, *Khutbat-e-Azad*, p. 44.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

K.M. YUSUF*

> "The devotion and unswerving loyalty with which he served the motherland are examples for all of us to follow. The best way in which we can pay homage to his memory on this solemn occasion of his 10th death anniversary is to remember his lofty ideals, abjure all anti-national activities and work for complete unity of outlook and purpose in all our undertakings."
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> —*President Zakir Husain*

When the great Maulana passed away on February 22, 1958. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in one of the most touching tributes, emotionally said : "He represented and he always reminded me of what I have read in history about the great men of several hundred years ago, say, if I think of European history, the great men of the Renaissance, or in a later period, of the Encyclopaedists who preceded the French Revolution, men of intellect, men of action. He reminds me also of what might be called the great qualities of olden days the graciousness of them . . . . He was a peculiar and very special representative in a high degree of that great composite culture which has gradually grown in India."

It was the good fortune of Azad that the Holy Land of Mecca was his birth place, the ancient Hindustan his motherland and

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Islam his religion. His services to his motherland and the religion he professed were magnanimous. He preached truth and advocated love, and had a human mission inspired by lofty and sublime motives.

During his internment at the Ahmadnagar Fort in 1942 Maulana Azad had developed a fascination for and used to murmur a Persian couplet, meaning :

The taste of me may be insipid, but my worth is great :
I am a fruit grown before the season.

If ever there was a manifestation of the truth of this couplet, it was when Azad at the age of 16 delivered a discourse on no less a subject than *Rationalism in Islam* at the annual gathering of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-ul-Islam. Lahore, before a galaxy of men of letters. His learned discourse, his wisdom of thought and his remarkable erudition baffled men like the celebrated Maulana Altaf Husain Hali and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. At the young age of 34 Azad had the unique distinction of being elected the President of the Indian National Congress.

Maulana Azad's famous commentary on the Holy *Quran* known as the *Tarjumanu'l-Quran*, though incomplete, is universally accepted as a towering monument to the author's erudition and originality of thought, and stands amongst the foremost interpretations of the Islamic philosophy. He was a rare force in Urdu and his writings left a permanent mark in Urdu literature and journalism. "The rhetorical eloquence of *Al-Hilal*, the philosophical depth of *Al-Balagh*, the long, rolling, rhythmic style of *Tazkirah*, the brilliance of his commentary on the *Quran*, with its exquisite and thought-provoking digressions, the relish of the fine, personal touch in the prose of *Ghubar-i-Khatir*—all this can be traced to his deep scholarship coupled with his sensitive and cultivated spirit."

Equally vast was his knowledge of the history and literature of Iran and Arabia. He was perfectly at home with the Persian and Arabic languages and spoke them with marked eloquence and fluency. His memory was a rich treasure-house of all the best poetry of the East, the poems of Sadi, Hafiz, Firdausi, Khayyam, Rumi, Khaqani, Khusrau, Farabi, Sanai, Sai'b, Naziri, Urfi, Kalim, Hazin, Ghani Kashmiri, Ghalib as well as of Mutanabbi,

Ibn Duraid, Abu'l-'Ala Al-Ma'arri, Abu Nawas, and Ibnu'l Farid enriched his talks. Well-versed in Islamic studies, he was, perhaps one of the most brilliantly learned men in the Islamic world. Impressed by the encyclopaedic erudition, the late Prof. Sayeed Naficy of Iran remarked : "It is my feeling that very few have been his equal and perhaps none his superior."

After becoming the Union Minister he could no longer devote much of his time to literary pursuit. His latest writing was an Introduction to the *History of Philosophy*: *Eastern and Western* published by the Government of India in two volumes, which received approbation from all over the world. The Introduction beings with a Persian couplet which compares the Universe to an old manuscript of which the first and last pages are lost. Another piece of his outstanding writing was the 16-page Foreword to Dr. S.N. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* wherein the Maulana masterly diagnosed the causes and the backgrounds of the 1857 Revolt. It is worth-studying by any serious student of the Indian history. "Azad was first and last an educationist in the wider and deep sense of the word, i.e., one passionately concerned with the inculcation of the right ideals and values and the attitude in the people."

Maulana Azad was dragged into politics, to quote the words of Prof. Humayun Kabir, "by sheer force of circumstances." His ideal in politics was the late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. In *India Wins Freedom*, the great Maulana has expressed great admiration for this patriot-statesman of Bengal.

Azad proclaimed his political credo through *Al-Hilal* in 1912. This paper took the Muslims of India by storm and deeply moved the Muslim intelligentsia as well. His powerful writings swept across the country and galvanised the hearts and mind of the older and the younger generations alike. *Al-Hilal* formulated a new political faith, created a revolutionary stir among the masses, and "soon became the focus where the resurgent spirit of Indian Moslems found its finest expression."

His services to the country as a sagacious statesman, an ardent patriot and a great intellectual are inestimable. In 1940 when the Hindu-Muslim relation was reaching a breaking point, Azad was once again elected the President of the Congress and occupied that high office till 1946. This was the most momentous period of Indo-British political relations when negotiations for

transfer of power were carried on between the British Government and different political parties and delicate questions were discussed.

For nearly 50 years Maulana Azad stood as a champion of nationalism and progress, freedom and democracy. He suffered for his convictions throughout his public life, and laid the foundation of Secular India along with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Azad's counsel was sought to resolve all complicated tangles and it was freely and frankly given without fear and favour. The question of popularity or otherwise never weighed with him.

Maulana Azad was a great Muslim and an Indian first and an Indian last. How memorable were the words which he proclaimed delivering the Presidential Address at the 1942 Ramgarh Session of the Indian National Congress : "I am a Muslim and this fills me with pride . . . . But in addition to these feelings, I am also the possessor of another, which has been created by the stark realities of my external life. The soul of Islam is not a barrier to this belief : in fact, it guides me in this path. I am proud to be an Indian. I am an integral part of this unified and impartible nation. The glory of this nation is incomplete without this valuable component. I am an essential factor in its composition and I shall never give up this claim."

After the attainment of independence, Maulana Azad became the first Education Minister of Free India and presided over the educational and cultural destiny of this great country till the last breath of his life. The portfolio of Natural Resources and Scientific Research (re-named Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs) was also his creation. The 11 years of his eventful ministership have been most momentous in the history of educational development in India. "The appointment of the University Education Commission (1948) with their report of 1949 : the appointment of the Secondary Education Commission (1952) with their report of 1953 : the reorganisation of the All India Council for Technical Education from its inception on 30th November, 1945, to its amended form of today : the chain of laboratories of scientific research established during the period : the establishment of the Kharagpur Institute of Higher Technology : the rapid development of the Indian Institute of Science; the establishment of the University Grants Commission with considerable financial

resources these are some of the highlights in the animated scene."

But Maulana Azad's notable contribution as Education Minister was the establishment of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations at New Delhi of which he was the life-long President. The ICCR Library was started with 8,000 volumes presented by the Maulana from his personal collections. This organisation was set up with the object of establishing and strengthening the cultural relations between India and Asian countries, particularly the West Asian. It gave an impetus to the study of Asiatic cultural problems and in promoting cultural activities in India and abroad. At his initiative the ICCR undertook the publication of two important journals—the *Indo-Asian Culture* in English and *Al-Thaqafat-ul-Hind* in Arabic and extended patronage to our *Indo-Iranica.*

Impressed by the learned standard of the *Indo-Iranica,* Maulana Azad sanctioned in 1950 through the ICCR an annual subsidy of Rs. 10,000 towards its publication. The intention of the Maulana was to develop it as a first-rate journal and make it an instrument of cultural link between India and Iran. In 1961, Prof. Humayun Kabir, the then Union Minister and President of the ICCR, raised the subsidy to Rs. 12,000 per annum. The *Indo-Iranica* got a severe jolt early in 1965 when the ICCR, under the presidentship of Mr. M.C. Chagla, decided to discontinue the annual subsidy by Maulana Azad, for reasons best known to them. But despite the set-back the *Indo-Iranica* is being published regularly and is patronised by eminent scholars of India and abroad. It has already become a store-house of information on Iran and Iranology, and is read with interest in foreign countries. *This journal is a living tribute to the memory of Maulana Azad.* The March 1958 issue (Vol. XI, No. 1) of the journal was dedicated to the memory of this erudite scholar and freedom-fighter of India.

Maulana Azad's contribution to the cause of Indo-Iranian friendship is substantial. It was entirely due to his efforts that a Cultural Agreement was signed between the Governments of India and Iran on December 1, 1956. This Agreement, in fact, revived the ancient link between India and Iran and paved the way for mutual co-operation in the field of literature and culture. By this Agreement the two Governments undertook to spare no efforts in

the reciprocal exchange of books, publications, students, teachers, scholars : and to take all necessary steps for the growth of good-will between the people of India and Iran and the strengthening of cultural bonds between the two countries. This Cultural Agreement was signed by Maulana Azad and Dr. Ali Asghar Hekmat on behalf of their respective Governments, and it is a landmark in the history of the Indo-Iranian cultural relations. Actually, the Maulana paved the way for this cultural pact during his short visit to Iran in 1952 when the Doctorate (*Honoris Causa*) was conferred upon him by the University of Teheran.

Two prominent Indians, Prof. Humayun Kabir and Dr. Tara Chand, an ex-Indian Ambassador to Iran, had the unique distinction of working in close association with Maulana Azad, and it is worth reproducing here their personal reminiscence of the great Maulana. Prof. Kabir says : "Maulana Azad's greatest contribution to Indian public life was his insistence on the highest standards in private and public life. He was essentially kind hearted but he could be stern where moral principles were involved. He refused to compromise with evil and struggled for what he considered right till his last days. In fact, his death was hastened by the great mental and moral conflict he had to face in the last fortnight of his life. But he never flinched, and adhered to this principles even at the cost of friendship."

More impressive are the words of Dr. Tara Chand : "As a man he was fearless, neither the frowns of the government nor the hostility of his misguided countrymen could turn him from the path which he had chosen for himself. He took his stand upon truth, his resolution was firm as a rock. He combined in his person the qualities of a great leader and a humanitarian. He endured hardships which might break the spirit of a weaker man without flinching, yet he bore no ill-will against any man including his enemies. He had won great mastery over his self. Worldly pleasures and temptations did not disturb him, nor did he allow suffering and defeat to affect his thought and action. Such men are not born every day. By any standard he was greet."

Maulana Azad was a synthesis of what is best in the composite culture of Secular India, and one who combined in himself the great qualities of intellect with action and resolution with graciousness. To quote *Bharat Ratna* Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, ex-President of India : "There is no doubt that we will

not see the like of him again. . . ."

The Iran Society, through the pages of the *Indo-Iranica,* pays its respectful homage to the sacred memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Well says Jalaluddin Rumi :

Ba'd az wafat turbat-i-ma dar zamin maju,
Dar Sinaha-yi mardum-i-Arif mazar-i-mast.

Seek not on earth for our dust after we die,
In the hearts of men of lore our sepulehre lie.

—(*Tr. Dr. M. Ishaque*)

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : A NEW ASSESSMENT OF HIS THOUGHTS

M. Stepaniants

The history of the Indian Muslims since the 1857-59 uprising against the British rule upto the victorious conclusion of the national liberation movement in 1947 is characterised by a variety of trends in their religious, philosophical, social and political outlook. In spite of this diversity, in the long-run, they have shaped into two main trends in the political field. They were : the communal movement, which resulted in the formation of Pakistan, and the movement for Hindu-Muslim unity.

In the concluding stage of the national liberation movement, these two trends were relatively personified by two political figures—Mohammad Ali Jinnah who led the communalist movement and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who stood for the unity of Hindus and Muslims.

The two main religio-philosophical trends of Indian Muslims were religious modernism and revivalism. Again, if we are to associate two great names with these trends, the first was represented by the poet-philosopher Mohammad Iqbal, and Maulana Azad can be considered one of the foremost ideologists of Muslim revivalism in India. It is necessary to make the reservation here that the distinction between modernism and revivalism in the religio-philosophical trends among Indian Muslims is itself rough and relative and the connotations are not strictly applicable. Each of these trends contains within itself, not only different

ideological tendencies, but sometimes trends which produced contradictory practical results. For example, among the revivalists, the Jamat-i-Islam wanted to go back to the medieval economic and social structure. On the other hand, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad sought to express in revivalism the democratic content of Islam, applying it to the political conditions of his times.

Azad, with the majority of his compatriots considered religious beliefs to be a necessary element not only in the life of every individual, but in the life of the society as a whole. Philosophy and science, according to him, gave us knowledge of facts, but they were not able to give man spiritual certainty and inner peace of mind. "Religion", wrote Azad, "gives us the belief in moral values. And this a belief whose light cannot come to us except through religion. It teaches us that life is a duty which must be fulfilled. It is a burden which must be borne."

After joining the national liberation struggle Maulana Abul Kalam Azad looked to religion not only for answers to metaphysical problems, but also for solution to the concrete political problems of the day. He was not satisfied with the traditional interpretation of the Koran, which he considered dogmatic and an obstacle to progressive social development.

He sought to interpret the Koran in the light of modern times. But he did this, not by modernising Islamic dogma, but by revivalism of the original teachings of Islam.

Azad's method of interpretation of the Koran was : "to search for the reality about it in its own pages." (Abul Kalam Azad, *The Tarjuman-al-Quran*, Vol I, Bombay, 1965, p xxx ii).

Azad sought to read Koran as it used to be read and understood by Muslims at the time of the Prophet. In this, he took account of the fact that the first generation of people among whom the Koran was read were not sophisticated and their mind was not cast in any artificial or "conventional mould furnished by civilization. It was content to receive a simple thought in its plain simplicity." (*ibid*).

Koran's thought, according to Azad, was very simple. Following his chosen method, he explained the origin of the word 'Allah', the name of the Creator thus : "the burst of ecstacy and admiration before the almighty creator expressed itself in the exclamation 'Ilah indicating wonder and the humbleness of man."

Azad did not even try to go into a logical explanation of the

existence of God. He held that it was unnatural for man to doubt, or to reject the existence of God, because the feeling that God exists is in the very nature of human beings. Starting from the postulate of the existence of God, he analyzes the attributes of God, in understanding which, he maintains, man is very often wrong. According to Azad, it is as natural for man to anthropomorphize divine attributes as it is for him to have an unshakable faith in the existence of God. "Whenever he tries," he writes, "to visualize a thing unseen or unfelt, he inevitably conjures up its qualities and feeling of which he is aware in his own mundane life. . . whenever man attempted to carve out an image of God, he gave to him his own shape." (*ibid.*, p. 105).

According to Azad, only the Koran shows the middle way between the transcendentalism of the Upanishads, which leads, in the ultimate analysis to the rejection of any divine attributes at all, and anthropomorphism. Though Maulana Azad was right in seeing in Islam a tendency to overcome anthropomorphism he made two inaccuracies. Firstly, he was wrong in holding that the first attempt of overcome an anthropomorphic understanding of God was made by Islam, it was not Islam but judaism, which first tried to overcome anthropomorphism. Secondly, neither Islam nor Judaism fully succeeded in overcoming anthropomorphism as can be seen, for example, from the fact that both Allah in Koran and Yahweh in Judaism act and speak like human beings.

Azad's interpretation of divine attributes formed the basis of his ontological views. He assumed four main divine attributes, which in the first Surat of Koran are determined as Rabbul-i-Alamin, Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim, Malik-i-Yawmiddin.

AZAD'S CONTRADICTORY INTERPRETATION

The sociological inferences arising out of Azad's interpretation of divine attributes are rather contradictory. On the one hand, by accepting the expediency and harmony of the universe, which are seen as the expression of divine providence and mercy, man is reduced to a passive existence in this beautiful and harmonious universe. Any action by man to reorganise this world thus became senseless and irrelevant. On the other hand, by conceding divine justice to reward or punish the action of man, Azad held man responsible for his actions, thus admitting man's free will.

Azad's epistemology inevitably follows from the theism of his ontology, with its recognition of God as the leading force in the process of human knowledge. The divine guidance (*hidayat*) manifests itself in the abilities of instinctive, sensitive and rational knowledge. Even the highest form of knowledge is imperfect, because according to Azad "what is beyond our senses, reason can scarcely comprehend . . . Even in the sphere of mundane activity which may be regarded as its field of operation, reason or intellect cannot always give us an effective lead." (*ibid.*, p. 151).

But there is a force which can correct the mistakes of the intellect and show men the right way. This is the force of divine revelation (*Al-Huda*), or, in other words, Religion, the way of life. To Azad, this revelation or religion was not a blessing confined to one people, but given to mankind, without any discrimination, through a number of prophets, whose teachings did not contradict each other. They all aim at uniting all people in their belief in the oneness of God.

Azad however made a distinction between the spirit of religion and its outward expression. According to him, Koran teaches that differences existing between religions are not differences of the spirit—*Din*, but distinctions in the outward expression of religion, in the ways and methods of worship (Shar'a and Minhaj). These distinctions are natural as they are determined by the different social conditions and times.

The idea of the oneness of God and through it the idea of the unity of humanity provides the main theoretical justification for the political stand Azad took in the national liberation movement.

His philosophical and political views find full expression in the pages of journals edited by him—firstly, in *Al-Hilal*, (June 1912, November 1914) and then in *Al-Bilagh* (November 1915, March 1916). The decision to publish the magazines, which moulded the opinion of Indian Muslims, was taken after his two-year stay in a number of Muslim countries—Iran, Egypt, Syria and Turkey. The acquaintance with Iraqi revolutionaries, with leaders of the Young Turk movement, with the followers of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, greatly influenced the world political outlook of the young Azad. The realisation of the need to change the attitude of Indian Muslims towards the colonial administration had already come, directly after the partition of Bengal in 1905

and the events following it. Now, it matured into a firm political conviction. The main objective of his journals became the awakening of Indian Muslims, rallying them into political activity in their struggle against the British.

The publication of *Al-Hilal* was a challenge to those who followed the Aligarh movement, initiated by Syed Ahmed Khan, who stood for cooperation of Muslims with the British, seeing in it the only way for the salvation of the Muslims community in India. Rejecting loyalty to the British, Azad took the first steps away from the policy of the Aligarh school. The next step, no less important, was a rejection of the positions of narrow religious nationalism leading to communalism and weakening of the national liberation movement.

AZAD'S THOUGHT AFTER A DECADE

But the evolution of Azad's thoughts took a period of ten years. Till then, through the pages of *Al-Hilal* Azad spoke as a Muslim nationalist who inseparably linked politics with religion. His statement to a correspondent of the *Al-Hilal*, published in the issue of December 29, 1912 is characteristic of his views in those days : "You have suggested separation of politics from religion. But if we do this what, then, is left with us ? We have developed our political thinking from religion . . . we believe that every thought which draws inspiration from any institution (including politics) other than the Quran is Kafr (infidelity)." (Abdul Waheed Khan, *India Wins Freedom, the Other Side*, Karachi 1961, pp. 22-23).

Azad did not realize then the need for the unity of Hindus and Muslims in the common struggle against colonialism. On the contrary he advocated political separation of the two communities. "Islam", he stated, "is such a perfect religion that its followers need not copy (imitate) Hindus in moulding their party. There is no greater shame for the Muslims than to beg from others for political education. The Muslims must not join any political party. They were the leaders of the world. If they submit to God, the whole universe will bend to their will."

Azad set religious unity of the Muslims against unity of the nation, considering that every Muslim is first of all a citizen of the World Muslim Brotherhood. These ideals of Azad undoubtedly

were influenced by the ideas of Pan-Islamism, which was widely spread in the whole Muslim world at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Azad more than anybody else among Indian Muslims advocated the Pan-Islamic theory of Jamaluddin Afgani. Unlike Mohammed Iqbal, who, though influenced by Afgani, never reduced the idea of Pan-Islamism to the defence of the Khalifate, Azad believed that the political loyalty to the Khalifate and the complete submission to it of all the Muslims of the world was the pillar of the pan-Islamic society. According to Azad, the submission of the Muslim community to the Khalif is not of a religious, but of a political character, because the religious guidance in Islam is a prerogative of God and His Prophet. However, Azad made a very essential reservation, that the political loyalty would be absolute so long the Khalif acted in correspondence with the dogmas of the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet.

Not belittling Azad's enthusiasm for religious nationalism and even in a certain degree for Islamic separatism, it should be said in all fairness that it was not those ideas which brought popularity to Azad. He became popular mainly because of the militant anti-colonial character of his journals. It is logical therefore that in 1914 *Al-Hilal* was banned, and the same happened to *Al-Bilagh* which continued to espouse the cause of *Al-Hilal.* And Azad himself was exiled from Calcutta.

DECISIVE PERIOD

The Governments of Punjab, Delhi, U.P. and Bombay deprived him of the right to live in these provinces. Since April 1916 upto the end of 1919 Azad was interned in Ranchi. The years of internment were for Azad the decisive period in reconsidering his own views. In this he was influenced by the development of the events in India and by the violent growth of the national liberation movement in the country. The final deviation from ultra Islamic nationalism to the positions of cooperation between Muslims and Hindus in the struggle against British colonialism was promoted also by the policy of the Indian National Congress towards the Khilafat.

The Khilafat movement against the forces of imperialism which broke up the Ottoman empire and the power of the Turkish

Sultan, got the support not only on behalf of Muslims but from all those who opposed imperialism in general. On the initiative of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian National Congress expressed its solidarity with the Khilafat movement and started a mass agitation in defence of Turkey and other Muslim states against imperialist aggression.

The evolution of Azad's outlook from religious to secular bourgeois nationalism was determined in a great degree by the developments in Turkey and the Arab countries, particularly the elimination by Ata Turk the institution of Khalifs and the strengthening of Arab nationalism which was based on the unity of territory, language, history and culture of Arab peoples.

In 1920, Abul Kalam Azad became a member of the Executive Committee of the Indian National Congress, and to the end of his life he remained one of the respected leaders of the party supporting and working for Hindu-Muslim unity.

The developments of the liberation movement in India convinced Azad that its success depended above all on unity of all Indians irrespective of their religious, language and other differences. Azad justly believed that the so-called communal problem could and had to be solved after India got her independence. According to him, the partition of the country on religious basis would not solve the problem; on the contrary, it would make Hindu-Muslim antagonism more acute. "Two states confronting one another", he said, "offer no solution of the problem of one another's minorities, but only lead to retribution and reprisals by introducing a system of mutual hostage." (Azad : *India Wins Freedom*). Unlike many of his compatriots Azad understood that the root-cause of Hindu-Muslim and, in general, communal conflicts is not in religious sentiments, but in certain socio-economic reasons. "The real problems", he wrote, "of the country were economic, not communal. The differences related to classes, not to communities. Once the country became free, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs would all realise the real nature of the problems that faced them and communal differences would be resolved". (*ibid.*, p. 184).

Azad foresaw international repercussions due to Partition. Therefore, he firmly opposed political independence at the cost of the unity of the Indian people and the partition of the country. "If an angel were to descend from the high heavens and proclaim

from the heights of the Qutab Minar, 'Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within 24 hours swaraj is yours', I would refuse the preferred Swaraj, but will not budge an inch from my stand. The refusal of Swaraj will affect only India while the end of our unity will be the loss of the entire human world." (*Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, a memorial volume, edited by Humaun Kabir, New Delhi 1959, p. 49).

TWO-NATION THEORY REJECTED

Azad rejected the two-nation theory which was put forward by the leaders of the Muslim League to justify their demands for partition. While in his youth, Azad stressed in his writings and speeches the isolation of Muslims, their superiority over the followers of other religious, particularly of Hinduism, and called on Muslims to follow a specific "Islamic way", he now advocated the indissolubility of the fortunes of Indian Muslims and Hindus their common social and political interests determined by the centuries of common life. In his presidential address at the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress in 1940 Azad stated : "Our language, our poetry, literature, society, our tastes, our dresses, our traditions and the innumerable realities of our daily life bear the zeal of a common life and a unified society . . . our social intercourse for over one thousand years has blended into a united nationalism."

Those who are criticizing Azad often try to accuse him of being contradictory. In fact, the philosophical and socio-political views of Azad in later life were very much different from those he held in his youth. However, this contradictoriness cannot be an evidence of his inconsistency, it only shows the logical evolution of Azad's views, determined by the historical conditions of the development of Indian society. Once having rejected the former convictions, Azad firmly, and we can even say courageously, advocated his new convictions prompted by his life's experience, by the experience of the struggle.

Azad based his conception of nationalism on the community of territory, history and culture of the people. Azad explained that nationalism was one of the highest stages in the development of human relations and collective feelings. It is higher, for instance, than the realisation of family relations, than the feelings between

the people of the same village, city or district. Azad has not succeeded in giving precise definition to the notion of nation. However, it could be concluded from his speeches and writings that he related nationalism to a certain territorial and historical community. It is important to point out the distinction that Azad made in the nature of nationalism—the "aggressive" and "defensive" types. Analysing the history of the European nations Azad came to the conclusions that "though nationalism was born to defend the freedom and the rights of man, later on it became the greatest impediment to their achievement" (*ibid.*, p. 37). So Azad rightly saw the tendencies in the development of bourgeois nationalism, though he did not comprehend its real causes.

In Azad's interpretation, Islam does not oppose nationalism if it is not of an aggressive character. At the same time Islam recognises two stages above it. These are the feelings of affiliation to one religion which unites the people of different countries and nations, and the highest form of community which is the realization of belonging to a world human brotherhood. Though the final end of Islam is to achieve this highest stage, according to Abdul Kalam, Islam succeeded to reach only the former, and he identifies this as the medieval Khilafate.

IDEA OF WORLD CITIZENSHIP

In the last decade of his life, Azad began to speak and write on the idea of world citizenship. He considered that it was necessary to revise the method of teaching geography and history in order to reach "the unity of world and humanity." (*Speeches of Maulana Azad*) In his presidential address at the 2nd session of Indian National Commission for co-operation with UNESCO Azad said : "We must have new maps for children in the elementary stages in which the world will be painted in one colour; we must teach the child that he is a denizen of the world first and foremost, and then go on to tell him that just as a town is divided into different wards for purposes of convenience, so the world is divided into segments like Asia and America, Africa and Europe, but such divisions do not disrupt the unity of the world."

The idea of world citizenship was logically connected and based on Azad's conception of one God and religious pluralism. It was a native and utopian hope for solving world conflicts by

way of reforms in the field of education and by synthesis of cultures.

Azad sought to prove not only the unity of different religious teachings and the necessity of their co-existence, but equally tried to find reconciliation for the so-called conflict between West and East by pointing out similarities in the cultures of West and East. He explained the difference between these two cultures as a difference in the accent each placed on different aspects of the same problem.

EASTERN AND WESTERN CONCEPT OF MAN

According to Maulana Azad, since the times of the Greek philosophers, the West always paid more attention, not to what man is, but to what he does. The East, in contrast, laid stress on the internal spirituality of man. According to the Eastern concept, man cannot be understood unless he is seen as the emanation of God. Maulana Azad believed that the Western as well as Eastern concepts suffer from onesidedness in the understanding of man. The Eastern concept raises man to the level of divinity and Koran even considers him to be the regent of God on the earth. That makes man the highest form of creation. But the same concept, as Azad rightly points out, carries within itself elements of fatalism. Because, if man is the emanation of God, then everything he does, ultimately happens according to the will of God. This in its turn, reduces man so "a toy in the hands of Fate." Here, Maulana Azad practically recognizes the impossibility of solving the problem of theodicy within the framework of religio-philosophical conception.

Maulana Azad sees another weakness of the Eastern conception of man in the fact that by stressing the unity of man with God, it makes man indifferent to human sufferings, looking at them as some illusion. From this follows, according to Azad "the Eastern mode of thought" which "has at times paid inadequate attention to social welfare and progress." (*ibid.*, p. 186)

On the contrary, the Western conception stresses the necessity of social progress which can be achieved as a result of the personal efforts of every member of human society.

However, Azad saw the weakness of the Western conception in underestimating the spiritual aspects of the human being. "If

we think of man as only a progressive animal, there is nothing to prevent his using science to further interests based on the passions he shares in common with animals" (*ibid.*, 185) Azad believed that humanity's salvation lay in the synthesis of the Western and Eastern concepts of man. "If the achievements of Western science can be utilized in the Eastern spirit of man's affinity with God, science would become an instrument not of destruction but for the establishment of human prosperity, peace and progress . . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 187)

What Azad calls the Western and Eastern concept of man is, in fact, materialistic and idealistic interpretation of man. To say that the eastern people always understood man in the idealistic sense will mean denying the materialistic elements, which, in fact, do exist in the philosophical thoughts of the East. On the other hand, the philosophical theories of the West cannot be reduced to materialism, by the way, in the vulgar sense of the term.

It is a fact that idealism mainly dominates the Eastern thought, and materialism is widely spread in Western thought. But it would be wrong to determine the idealistic philosophy as purely Eastern and the materialistic philosophy as purely Western.

The desire of Maulana Azad to synthesise the so-called Western and Eastern concepts of man is in fact an attempt to reconcile idealism with materialism. For Azad himself, the conclusion about the need for such a synthesis is the result of the progressive evolution of his ideas from absolute conformity to the religious ideology to the realization of some merits of materialism

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AZAD—GREAT PATRIOT

V.H. Desai

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, was an embodiment of national integration. His was an open book. Indeed, he rode like a Colossus on the political horizon of India at a time when the dark clouds were gethering over the sky to the utter dismay of the democratic and secular forces on the eve of the lapse of British paramountcy on this soil.

The Moulana never reconciled to the idea of partition of the country, despite the Mahatma relenting after meeting Lord Mountbatten. According to Azad, great change came over Gandhiji after he had interviewed Mountbatten. Azad said, "Gandhiji no longer spoke so vehemently against it (partition)."

The Congress Working Committee met on June 12, 1947 and prepared a draft resolution for the AICC meet on June 14 and 15, 1947 and accepted it.

While speaking on the resolution, the Moulana with a heavy heart said : "that the decision of the Working Committee was not the right decision, but the Congress had no alternative, as the present state of indecision and drift could not be allowed to continue any longer, specially in view of the internal strife and disorder and the obstinacy of the Muslim League. He felt sure that the partition would be short-lived and the seceding parts of India would, in the very near future, hurry back to the Indian Union."

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad first shot into nationalist

movement when he launched his weekly in Urdu, *Al-Hilal* on July 1, 1912. He wielded a powerful pen and gave expression, without fear, to his nationalist ideas which were in conflict with the Aligarh school of thought. Azad was therefore a bote noir to the Government and was interned in Ranchi from 1915 to 1919. The *Al-Hilal* also boldly told the Muslims that their insistence on cowslaughter was not conducive to communal peace. The circulation of *Al-Hilal* reached 11,000 within six months.

It was a fateful period for the country. The Rowlat Bills, Jalianwala Bagh tragedy and the Khilafat Movement wrong had lashed a smothered people into determined fury. The time was past for negotiations and deputations which served little purpose. Gandhiji, back from his South African epoch, daringly preached non-co-operation. But non-violent non-co-operation was something new, it spiritualised politics.

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, just out of prison, with his great learning and authority, provided the next and the sanction for the new strategy. On the memorable day, Jaunary 18, 1920, the Moulana met the Mahatma at Hakim Ajmal Khans. Lokamanya Tilak was there, as also the Ali brothers. A new chapter in Indian history was opened.

Al-Hilal took up the new challenge, fearlessly unequivocally, thinking Muslims paused and listened as the Paper grew steadily in influence and circulation. It attracted wide attention. There was a war on and its unbridled popularity disturbed the government. The *Pioneer* wrote an 'inspired' editorial charging the Moulana with a pro-German outlook. It was amazed that the government has managed to tolerate its writings. Yet, for eighteen months afterwards, the government went on tolerating until they could tolerate no more. They forfeited the security of the paper, banned the Moulana's entry into the Punjab, the U.P. and Madras and expelled him from his own province of Bengal. Broken in health, Abul Kalam Azad went to Ranchi to recuperate. A whole-hearted admirer of Sir Syed's magnificent work, he was nevertheless grieved that he could not support his creed. A new generation of Mussalmans arose and broke away from the Aligarh school and looked up to the Congress. They saw in British's foreign policy a deliberate hostility to Islam.

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad's election to high office of the

Congress President in March 1940 was not a political stunt, a sop to Muslim sentiment; it was a foregone conclusion, a predetermined plebiscite. Before him there Muslim Presidents like Badruddin Tyabji, Rahntuallah Sayani, Moulana Mohammed Ali, M.A. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan. He was the youngest President of the Congress, being just thirty-five. On his election, Mahatmaji took pride : "that he is today, the supreme head of the Indian National Congress has deep meaning."

The immaculate "modern theologian and philosopher, one of the most learned men of the East, an intellectual and savant" in John Gunther's American idiom, was a political rebel. He rebelled against the government quite sometime before the Mahatma's bold bid for Indian Independence, and was promptly interned.

Moulana Azad vigorously lashed out at the communities into contrition. One leader went on record to say : "He surpassed himself in the pathos and fervour of his eloquence and the generosity of his sentiment."

The Moulana had the blueset of Mood in him. A theologian ancestor, Shaikh Jamaluddin Dehlavi, Akbar's celebrated contemporary, risked that Emperor's ire by questioning his "infallibility in matters relating to Islam; it was the first instance of *Satyagraha* in the family. The Moulana, according to experts, was about the tenth in paternal descent from Jamaluddin. Another learned progenitor, Shaikh Muhammed, refused to do the enforced obeisance to the Emperor Jahangir and suffered a four years' sentence in Gwalior Fort.

A tell and stately, of ochrevermillion tint, with luminous eyes, the fine silk sherwani, sweeping over his rounded shoulder, the Moulana seemed to look like a nobleman of old-world Delhi, breath in best Islamic tradition. Said Pandit Nehru, "Abul Kalam Azad has specially cultivated a look of venerable age to give a suitable background to his great learning." A pure reflective intellectual, he was no demogogue. He was by no means unmindful of the hungry millions, who had put him on his "high pedestal."

When the Prince of Wales (who later became the Duke of Wellington came to India for political sight-seeing, the Congress proclaimed a boycott. The government acted swiftly, ruthlessly. There was an orgy of arrests, C.R. Das declared : "It is the agony

of bondage. The whole of India is a vast prison." Moulana Azad, after a lingering trial, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. He made his heroic statement, "an oration deserving penal servitude for life," in Gandhiji's phase. He said he was proud to belong to the illustrious band of world's satyagrahis—Jesus Christ, Socrates, and Galileo. His soul was "steeped in thankfulness and praise of God." He said he perfectly understood government, but added : "no power would tamely submit to movements likely to bring about its own decline." He turned the duress to good account, there he wrote his "Tazkira," and a good part of his celebrated commentary on the Quran.

Azad's observations on Pakistan are revealing too. He said: "These who make the proposal are flying in the face of history. When they say we are two nations, they beg the question. Providence brought us together over a thousand years ago. I detest this communal approach to the national Problem." Once the Moulana asked ruefully : should we part with reason and reality so completely as not even to ask why this is being done and how this affects our destiny before plunging into this deluge of death and destruction ?"

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THE MAN BEHIND THE MAULANA

SYEDA SAIYIDAIN HAMEED

"It was December, 1918. I was imprisoned at Ranchi. I had just stepped out of the mosque after the Isha prayer, when I felt that someone was following me. I turned around to see a man draped in a blanket standing behind me.

Do you wish to say something to me ?

Yes, Sir, I have come a long way.

Where from ?

From across the Frontier.

When did you reach here ?

This evening. I am a very poor man. I walked from Kandhar to Quetta. There I met traders from my country. They took me in their service and dropped me at Agra. I have walked all the way here from Agra.

Alas ! Why did you take all this trouble ?

So that I could ask you to explain some portions of the Quran to me. I have read each and every word of *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*.

The man stayed for a few days, then, suddenly, returned home. He did not meet me before leaving because he was apprehensive that I would try to give him money for travelling expenses. He did not want to burden me. His return journey, too, would have mostly been conducted on foot.

I don't remember his name. I don't even know whether he is alive or dead. Had my memory not failed me. I would have

dedicated this book to him."

These lines constitute the dedication of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *magnum opus, Tarjuman ul Quran.*

Mohiuddin Ahmad was born in 1988 at Mecca in an Indian family renowned for its piety and Islamic learning. His father. Maulana Khairuddin, himself a renowned scholar had settled there a few years earlier, and married Aliya, niece of one of his tutors. Sheikh Mohammed Zahid Watri. The family had two sons. Abu Nasr Ghulam Yasin, and Abul Kalam Mohiuddin Ahmad and three daughters, Zainab, the eldest who died young, Fatima, and Hanifa.

The family's aspirations are reflected in the name given to the second son. 'Abul Kalam' the 'sire of speech' or discourse.' At age five he sat down with his brother for his Quranic commencement. When Azad was 10 his father returned to India and settled in Calcutta where he was immediately acclaimed as *Pir* and *Murshid* and gathered a large following of disciples. There his two sons, Azad and Aah, started a strict regimen of traditional Islamic studies imparted to them by the best tutors, under the personal supervision of their disciplinarian father. By the time he was 15 years old. Azad had completed *Dars-e-Nizami*, a feat of learning which ordinary students could seldom attain even at a later age.

Given the educational drill, close parental supervision, and adulation of his father's disciples. Azad could have easily become his father's clone. He had every encouragement and opportunity to sit on his father's chair, already being revered as a *murshidzada.* Instead, he recalls, very early he had started to question all the norms of tradition and *taqlid.* In his letter dated October 12. 1942, written from the Ahmednagar prison, and published in his epistolary collection, *Gubar-e-Khatir*, he gives a succinct account of his mental unrest.

> "How well I remember ? I was not much older than 15 when my equanimity received its first blow. Stings of doubt pierced my serenity. It seemed there was something more to life than lessons offered by my immediate environment. The world of wisdom that I was surrounded with was insufficient. Much more existed which was still invisible to my eye. With the passage of years, these doubts became firmly entrenched.

> Finally, a time came when I had to destory with my own two hands the walls so carefully built by the loving hands of the family and environment. New structures had to be constructed in their place."

These lines contain the seeds of Azad's universal humanism. What are the attributes of an individual who believes in the efficacy of humanism as the overriding philosophy of life ? What did Azad possess which enabled him to extricate himself from the rigid sectarianism of his orthodox father, and having done that, what is it that made him see the human being as an embodiment of the divine ?

Perhaps what gave him this extra vision was the courage displayed at a very early age to question everything regardless of the consequences. In the very same letter, quoted above, he analyses and explains his disbelief :

> "The greatest impediment to human progress is man's imitation of the beliefs of his ancestors. Nothing can bind and truss him as fast as the chains of ancestral imitation. He cannot break these chains. Why ? Because he does not want to ! Their hold is so firm that neither education nor environment, can loosen them by a single link."

The key word is imitation or *taqlid.* The question that arose in the mind of the 15-year-old was "Why *taqlid.*" Faith should be based on knowledge. Blind imitation of ancestral traditions was not for him.

In 1912, when Azad launched, *Al-Hilal* it proved a powerful tonic to the growing constituency of the Muslim intelligentsia, reflected in the fact that its circulation reached the remarkable figure of 29,000, before it closed down two years later. His readers relished the satire, rhetoric and other literary skills Azad had at his command. It helped to stir the dormant sentiment of ordinary Muslims while impressing the intelligentsia with a religious fervour, often lacking in them. The Islam that Azad interprets to his readers is imbued with the spirit of universal humanism.

At the age of 24, Azad became an expert exegetical writer on the Quran. If it is read for itself, uncluttered by commentary,

says Azad, the Quran itself is the best exponent of universal brotherhood, the ultimate lesson in humanism. *The Surat ul-Fatiha* also called *Umm-ul-Quran* (Core of the Quran) consists of seven lines which epitomise the spirit of Islam. Maulana's commentary on *Surat-ul-Fatiha* is the most enlightened interpretation of this spirit. At the conclusion of this chapter is a short piece entitled *Surat-ul-Fatiha Ki Talimi Rooh*. It contains the quintessence of his ideas about universal humanism.

> "Here is a person singing the praise of his Lord. But the Lord he praises is not the Lord of any particular race or community or religious group but Lord of all the worlds, Rabbul-Alimin the source of sustenance and mercy, uniformly for all mankind."

Azad concludes this passage with the following words :

> "Think over what type of mind does all this argue for or aim to build ? Whatever view one might take this is clear that the mind which the *Surat-ul-Fatiha* depicts is a type of mind which reflects the beauty and the mercy of the God of Universal Campassion. It is in no sense fettered by prejudices of race or nation or other exclusive groupings. It is a mind imbued with Universal Humanism. This is the true spirit of the Quranic invitation."

To summarise the growth of universal humanism in the works of Abul Kalam Azad, one notices first of all, how the idea of a multi-religious Indian nationhood had superseded whatever ideas of Pan Islamism Azad held in the 20s. This grew next into the universal humanism of its mature thought. The period of Quranic exegesis was characterised by the dictum which provided the sanction for the fullest spirit of toleration in all religious matters, *Lakum Dinakum Walia Din* (Your religion is for you, mine for me). The basis of Azad's theology is that the Divine has many aspects, but love is by far, the foremost of those aspects. The gap between the human and the divine being what it is, human love of the divine can express itself only in the love of his creation as a whole. Further, he says, "The moth must seek the candle and if it seeks the candle only of the mosque, then it does

not know what it is to seek." This absolute humanism, far beyond the religious community, is opposed to all national divisions. In a world already divided between territorial nations it argues against further divisions on the basis of race, religion or ethnicity.

The spirit of Abul Kalam Azad's universal humanism is best summed up in a couplet by Allama Iqbal.

Bartar-az-gardum maqam-i-Adam ast
Asl-i-tehzib ehteram-i-Adam ast

(The essence of culture is respect for man. For his place is loftier than the heavens).

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MAULANA AZAD'S SECRET PAPERS

INDER JIT

Public interest continues to grow on what Maulana Azad has said in the 30 unpublished pages of his autobiography : "India Wins Freedom." Various stories are afloat, mostly based on conjecture or gossip. Not a few have claimed to speak with authority even though they were nowhere close to the Maulana or anywhere around. Today, I shall record what I consider to be the essence of Azad's views in these secret pages having had the good fortune of scooping the main views story of the Maulana's memories on February 1, 1959, in The Times of India which published it prominently on its front page with the headline Nehru's "Blunders" Led to Partition—Azad's autobiography.

I was then the Political Correspondent of the paper at New Delhi and had secured an advance copy of Azad's memoirs, thanks to good contacts built over the years. What I am offering the reader is based on what has been stated by Durga Das, acknowledged doyen of the Press corp, in his memoirs—India from Curzon to Nehru and After—published in 1969. Importantly, the book carries a foreword by Dr. Zakir Hussain, India's third President, who described the memoirs as "Indian history seen from the inside."

Why do I go by what Durga Das has written ? I am doing so because he was among the select few who enjoyed the Maulana's trust and confidence. Their friendship went back to 1924 when the Maulana presided over a special Congress session

in Delhi. In fact, Durga Das met Maulana for coffee every Sunday morning following Independence—a meeting which, according to Durga Das, "became a habit and one that proved most stimulating and rewarding." (He was then writing the popular and informative weekly Political Diary in the Hindustan Times under the pen-name of Insaf.) Durga Das adds: "We would discuss politics and personalities without inhibition. Azad would tell me in confidence all that happened in the Cabinet and the Working Committee meetings and I would keep him uptodate on happening elsewhere at home and abroad. The last of these meetings took place four days betore the Maulana's death." Nehru and Durga Das met at Azad's residence following the Maulana's demise. When Durga Das offered his condolence to Nehru the later replied in my presence: "My sympathy to you too. The Maulana regarded you as one of his close friends. Your loss is no less."

Not only that. As old Congressmen know, the Maulana and Durga Das worked together successfully in securing for Rajendra Prasad a second term as India's President in 1957, despite strong opposition from none less than Nehru himself. The story of what came to pass deserves to be recalled in Durga Das's own words as it throws valuable light on India's top leaders and national affairs. In the chapter entitled: "President and Prime Minister," Durga Das wrote: "There was high drama behind the scenes before Prasad got his second term as President. Nineteen fifty-six was drawing to a close when suddenly three of my rival columnists, two in Delhi and the third in Calcutta, started advocating out of the blue a case for a South Indian as President. Suspecting some deeper design, I sought from Home Minister Pant his comment on writings. Pant replied that Nehru did not want Prasad for a second term and had Radhakrishnan in mind for the job. Radhakrishnan himself was getting old and was not interested in a second term as Vice-President. Nehru, he added, had had a word with Prasad but the latter had replied that he was in the hands of the party.

> "I called on Azad for our usual get-together on Sunday morning and told him about what had appeared in the newspapers and Pant's comments on it. I asked him his own view and he warmly replied: 'Of course, I want Rajenbabu to

continue for a second term. But, what is his own feeling? Is Prasad willing to continue? Azad then suggested that I call on Prasad and find out. When I asked Prasad whether he had greed to retire or whether he would be available for another term he replied he would be guided in the matter by the wishes of the High Command, meaning that he would go by whatever Nehru and Azad wanted. I told Azad what Prasad had said to me and it was decided that he should take the earliest opportunity to call on him. Azad did this a couple of days later and informally obtained his consent for a second term during a walk in the famous Mughal Gardens of the President's House. I announced this in my next Political Diary which appeared on 18 December 1956. In fact, I opened the weekly column with the words: 'Dr. Rajendra Prasad has agreed to seek re-election as Union President. This puts an end to speculation on the subject. The Congress High Command, it is said, conveyed its wishes some time ago through Maulana Azad. . .'

"The disclosure came as a bombshell to those who were trying to build up Radhakrishnan for Presidentship. A telephone call followed from the Prime Minister's House. Nehru wanted to see me. When I called, Nehru enquired how I had decided on Prasad. I told him frankly that Azad had told me he had spoken to Prasad and that the latter had agreed. 'You know Panditji, I see him regularly, every Sunday,' I added, Nehru replied: 'Yes, I know', and I took leave. The story did not, however, end at that. Now it became a battle of the columnists, my rivals plugging in the view that the High Command had not yet decided finally on the question. Nehru could not take this line in view of Azad's firm stand and the enthusiastic approval with which leading MPs and other members of the electoral college hailed the disclosure in my Diary. Nehru then called on Prasad and suggested that he could retire after doing half the term and added that Azad had persuaded Radhakrishnan to continue as Vice-President with great difficulty. Prasad replied he would go by his health and might not do the full term. Nehru's expectations were, however, not fulfilled and Radhakrishnan had to wait full five years before he could occupy Rashtrapati Bhavan. . . ."

This was, however, not first time that Nehru and the Maulana differed. The Maulana's own biography, for instance, discloses with "deepest regret" the view that but for two mistakes by Nehru, "one of my dearest friends", the tragedy of partition might have been averted. (The word "mistakes" in the intro to my scoop in the Times of India was changed in the headline to "blunders.") Nehru's "fondness for abstract theory", wrote the Maulana, helped the Muslim League in 1937 to get a new lease of life. The League, according to the Maulana, was agreeable to joining a coalition Government in U.P. following the 1937 general elections to the provincial Assemblies provided two of its leaders were taken in the Cabinet of the two even signed a note (through the Maulana's good offices) pledging to accept the Congress programme. But to his "great regret", the Maulana found that Mr. Nehru later wrote to the Muslim League that he could not possibly give them two seats. Again in 1946, Nehru, on assuming Congress Presidentship, enabled Jinnah to go back on the mutually-accepted Cabinet Mission Plan and start a fresh offensive which ultimately led to Pakistan.

My news story became the subject of several questions at Nehru's monthly Press conference a week later : February 7, 1959. He recalled the various steps that ultimately led to the Congress agreeing to partition and expressed the opinion at the end that the late Maulana thought "too much in individual terms sometimes and not in terms of historical forces at work. . . I knew at the time he disapproved of what had happened. But he never made a reference to it. . . "Significantly, Nehru began his Press conference by saying that in a sense he was "more responsible" for the publication of the Maulana's book then anyone else. He had seen the book in manuscript form though he had not seen it since its publication. Humayun Kabir had given it to him in manuscript form and told him that he (Kabir) did not like the publication of some passages in the book. Nehru added : "I did not like suppression of anything that the Maulana Sahib wanted to be published. . . Clearly, I did not like some passages in it too in the sense of publication. But I advised Kabir : "You should publish the thing as Maulana would have liked it to be published. Neither you nor I have the right to come in the way of that.'"

Nehru did not stop there. Indeed, he expressed views which his legal heirs and others involved in the present squabble over

the publication of the remaining 30 pages need to note. He said : "It is true that some passages may not be liked by people. They are critical. But we must face things. We must not get worried about frank expression of opinions. In fact, I exercised a certain pressure on him (Kabir) that it should not be changed. Kabir was not responsible. I am more responsible." Asked whether the reflections in the book represented the views of the Maulana, he replied : "How can I be sure that these are as the Maulana would have liked. You must not take the book as verbally correct. Obviously, it is not. But broadly speaking, it does seem to me to represent Maulana Azad's broad way of thinking. The language is not exactly his." Importantly, Nehru was also asked whether he had seen the thirty pages of the Maulana's book which had been sealed in the National Archives for publication after 30 years. He replied : "Not only have I not read it but I did not know anything about it till after the Maulana's death."

Now the essence of the unpublished pages, Durga Das writes : "Nehru and Azad were intellectually and emotionally very close. Their friendship was based on two factors. First, they found themselves in agreement on most of the political issues that came before the Congress Working Committee. Secondly, Azad believed Nehru was an idealist with intellectual integrity, a progressive outlook and above all free from religious bigotry. At the same time, Azad was not unaware of Nehru's weaknesses. He blamed him for giving Jinnah the opportunity to win the leadership of the Muslims. But Azad revised his opinion of Nehru in the last two years of his life. Indeed, he went to the extent of expressing regret for being unfair to Patel and asserting that he was sure that the country would have been better off if Patel had been Prime Minister. What motivated this change ? Towards the end of his life, Azad realised that the best protection for the Muslims was the goodwill of the Hindus and a strong government. Ho told me he had come to the conclusion that Nehru's policies had weakened the administration and that his economic theories had failed to improve the living conditions of the people, especially the Muslims."

Maulana Azad shared with Durga Das his decision to leave behind for future historians his candid appreciation of men and events in the post-Independence period. According to what I gathered then, the Maulana also told him that he had asked

Humayun Kabir to publish this part of 30 pages only 30 years later as he was anxious not to embarrass or hurt Nehru, for whom he continued to have great affection. Durga Das was permitted by him to write about the essence of his revised opinions and views preferably after Nehru—but without reference to the secret pages. Azad was also known to be unhappy over the manner in which M.O. Mathai and a few others had came to exercise great power in the name of Nehru. (An agitated Maulana once got Nehru to stop Mathai from meddling with the appointment of the editor of a leading English daily published from New Delhi.) In the final analysis, what the Maulana eventually felt will be known only when the seal is broken and the secret pages become public. The Azad papers belong to the nation. The Maulana's wishes must be carried out, as personally favoured by Nehru. The people must have the benefit of his views and judgment without fear or favour—INFA.

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PARTITION WAS UNAVOIDABLE : MAULANA AZAD'S MISREADING OF HISTOTY

S. NIHAL SINGH

Irrespective of the explosive nature of the excised 30 pages of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's "India Wins Freedom", the tug of war over how it should be thrown open to public gaze has had two consequences. It has focussed attention again on an exceptional man and revived arguments about who is to blame for the subcontinent's partition.

For the Maulana was a scholar and a civilized man, and being an erudite Muslim as well, he played a key role in events leading up to the partition and in giving Muslims the sense of belonging after the event. That he, together with the Mahatma, was totally opposed to the partition was no secret, and he has written forthrightly on the subject in the book that became an instant bestseller.

Unlike other Indians, who have laid the blame for the partition entirely on the Muslim League and British machinations, the Maulana was wise enough and courageous enough to place some of the blame on Congress leaders, including his friend Jawaharlal Nehru. And the nervousness in the ranks of the Congress (I) today stems precisely from fears about what else the Maulana may have said about Jawahar, as he called him, and other Indian leaders.

NARROW VIEW

But that is to take a narrow view of a giant among men and women of the freedom movement. Because the Maulana spoke out of conviction, and he could not have been in the Indian National Congress had he not felt with all his being that it would be wrong to divide the subcontinent along religious lines. He lived to see the unhappy end of his dream and busied himself with the task of helping run a truncated new country.

The Maulana was right in pointing out the partial culpability of Congress leaders, in addition to the role played by Mohammed Ali Jinnah of the Muslim League and the logic of Britain's divide and rule policy, in the creation of Pakistan. Where the Maulana was wrong was in asserting that the last chance for averting the partition was lost in 1946, and he blamed Nehru for it. It was lost at least 10 years earlier at the time of the formation of the Congress ministry in U.P.

A whole series of developments, in particular the beginning of the last World War, the Congress non-cooperation campaign, the different attitude adopted by the Muslim League and British compulsions, was leading up to the denouncement of the partition. True, the British, exhausted after the war, belatedly devised plans, including the Cabinet Mission Plan, to try to keep India together. But the die had already been cast, and it needed only the brilliance of Jinnah to demolish the remaining hurdles in the creation of Pakistan.

Indeed, with hindsight, one can argue that the Cabinet Mission Plan, had it been implemented, would have been found unworkable and would have hamstrung the new nation, domestically and in taking its place in the comity of nations. The kind of consensus Nehru was able to build in pursuing his domestic and foreign policies would have been unattainable in a non-partitioned India.

The truth is that the Hindu-Muslim divide was not merely the creation of the British. Long periods of Mughal rule had etched it on Indian consciousness. The British rulers used this divide for their own purposes, as any foreign ruler would have done. The Congress, as it evolved under the baton of Mahatma Gandhi, had the noble aim of taking all Indians to freedom, and it speaks volumes for the stature of men and women of the independence

movement that they considered it as an immutable truth that an undivided India would march to freedom.

A secular India was an article of faith not only for Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Maulana but for many others. But in the ranks of the Congress, this belief often collided with the subconscious, if not conscious, Hindu-Muslim animosities, giving the Muslim League many opportunities to exploit. Even some of the Congress leaders were not free from the communal virus.

To an extent, therefore, the Congress leaders were living in a world of illusion, convinced as they were in the rightness and logic of their position. This mood was best captured by cartoonist Shankar in the early forties by depicting Pakistan as the moon—long before journeys to the moon became a reality. While events were inexorably taking the subcontinent towards one direction, Congressmen continued to scoff at the idea of a Pakistan.

Pakistan became inevitable once Jinnah was able to build on the feeling of a growing number of Muslims of the subcontinent that, despite protestations to the contrary, they would not get a square deal from the majority Hindu community in an independent India. Despite the guarantees that were sought to be evolved to assuage Muslim, fears, there was no way to satisfy the majority of Muslims, led by Jinnah, other than to give them their Pakistan.

True, no leader on either side of the Hindu-Muslim divide quite bargained for the kind of blood bath that accompanied the partition. But the fact that it needed the trigger of a mass migration, in either direction, to provoke mobs to indulge in unspeakable butchery is an indication of how far communal feelings had been inflamed.

CONGRESS LEADERS

The Congress leaders finally saw the writing on the wall, out of new-born conviction that there was no alternative or because, after a lifetime of agitation, they were eager to shape a new country. But the reasons for the partition could not be wished away, nor the consequences of the communal poison that had spread far and wide.

Mahatma Gandhi died fighting for the cause of Hindu-

Muslim amity, and Jawaharlal remained steadfast in his devotion to his secular beliefs, to the point of inviting charges of being partial to Muslims. But for the Maulana, the partition was, in a sense, a deeper tragedy because it seemed to negate a lifetime's work.

It is this deep personal anguish over the partition that led the Maulana to try to apportion blame for what, he fondly hoped, could have been prevented. He had little time for the Muslim League's theory of Pakistan, a theory he viewed as obscurantist or worse. And yet he felt let down by his colleagues in the Congress for not resisting the partition strongly enough. In the process, he perhaps clutched at straws to keep alive the hope in his heart that there were ways of averting the partition, even in 1946.

The Maulana, like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, never reconciled himself to his fellow Congress leaders accepting the partition, whatever the compulsions. The Muslim Leagues's claim was that it represented all Muslims and they used derogatory epithets for the Muslims in the Congress. The Maulana's stature and learning, particularly in Muslim theology, were such that he could dismiss such taunts with contempt. But for him, the unkindest cut was that Jawaharlal and the Mahatma finally bowed to what they viewed as the inevitable.

Thirty years after he wrote "India Wins Freedom", it is possible to take a more dispassionate view of events. It is possible even to argue that, but for the avoidable carnage that accompanied the partition, the coming into being of India and Pakistan was the best solution to a problem that had become intractable. That but for the tragedy of three wars the two countries have fought since the partition, India and Pakistan have separately been able to blossom according to their differing perceptions.

NO REAL OPTION

What Pakistan wants to be is a matter for its own people to decide, but India had no real option but to remain a secular country, despite Pakistan's formation. The Indian National Congress' has been a national legacy, and nothing but a secular policy can redeem the life work of the independence generation and the moral basis on which the state was founded. Even on the plane of realpolitik, the mix of the country's population would

militate against a sectarian policy.

The real tragedy is that the animosities that led to the partition and the carnage, as has been graphically depicted in the television serial "Tamas", are still smouldering. Communal riots continue to be a feature of the Indian state. The consequences of the partition are still with us. It is, of course, more difficult to build a secular state on the edifice of the events leading up to the creation of India and Pakistan than a theocratic entity. The controversies surrounding the Maulana's 30 pages, as indeed the rest of his book, would serve a purpose if it makes us aware of the tasks that lie ahead.

Harking back to what might have been is, in a sense, counterproductive. For one thing, it feeds the suspicion in Pakistan—now used more for its propaganda effect than otherwise—that India would rather undo the partition. For another, it does little service to present-day reality.

But the Maulana's refrain is a salutary one, in reminding us of the dreams our leaders dreamed in those days and the kind of indivisible independence they had as their objective. It was a noble dream, but one destined not to be fulfilled. And men like the Maulana were built on another scale, unlike the pygmies we see strutting the political stage today.

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AN INDIAN TILL THE END

MUSHIRUL HASAN*

Abul Kalam Azad was a scholar-politician, a distinction which lent much legitimacy to his political stance and his public pronouncements. His traditional background, combined with his intellectual stature, helped to create a mystique around his personality. This added to the charisma he was able to build during the first decade of this century, when he first experienced the regours of a hectic political life.

Standard accounts of Indian nationalism delineate two supposedly distinct phases in Azad's public life—the period from 1911 to 1924 when he was embroiled in the pan-Islamic upsurge in the sub-continent, and the so-called nationalist phase in the years thereafter. Such an exercise is based on the assumption that pan-Islamism and Indian nationalism were contradictory forces, and that Azad not only sensed the contradiction but was also able to extricate himself from the Khilafat fervour which gripped so many of his co-religionists in the early 1920s.

This approach implies a disjunction in Azad's political orientation where none existed. What needs emphasis is the basic continuity and consistency in his political beliefs, which enabled him to bridges between his pan-Islamic concerns and his nationalist commitments. In 1905-6 he was closely associated with revolutionary groups in Bengal because he regarded their anti-imperialism as parallel to similar movements in other Muslim

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lands. He claimed that he founded the *Al-Hilal*, the main spokesman of the growing pan-Islamic sentiments in India, to propagate his nationalistic, anti-imperialist stand.

In order to understand how Azad reconciled pan-Islamism with nationalism, one must turn to the ideological content of the Khilafat movement in India of which he was the principal theoretician.

PAN-ISLAMISM

It would appear that the essence of pan-Islamism implied a break with territorial nationalism. But its ideologues thought differently. They insisted that their activities had an unmistakable nationalist dimension because the sum and substance of pan-Islamism who to remove foreign domination. The emblem used on the Khilafat delegation stationery—made up of twin circles of equal size and overlapping, with the word 'Khilafat' on one and the word 'India' on the other—was symbolic of their patriotism and illustrative of their perceived link between their vision of a free India and the liberation of Muslim countries from the yoke of colonial rule.

As for the relationship between Indian Muslims and the Turks, it was in the nature of a compact, because both Turkey and India were subjected to colonial rule. For this reason, Azad observed that the Khilafat question was part of the larger issue of British imperialism. He therefore exhorted Khilafat leaders/workers to strive for India's freedom by means of non-cooperation; only then would they be able to save the Khalifa. This is how the Khilafat movement, despite its pan-Islamic bias was marged into a general political struggle for outstripping its original limitations.

In several areas of agrarian unrest in U.P. peasant grievances were not just tacked on to the Khilafat and non-co-operation programme, but the Khilafat Committees and the Kisan Sabhas provided a tangible sign of acting in unison in attacking their common identifiable enemy--the landlord—who was rightly perceived as the government's ally.

There can be no doubt that Azad provided this broad, nationalistic orientation to the Khilafat movement, in fact, his repeated assertion was that any form of association with the

become, if not a supporter, at least acquiescent towards the idea" of a divided India. But what surprised him most was the change in the attitude of Gandhi. Having told Azad on March 31, 1947 that "if the Congress wishes to accept Partition, it will be over my dead body", the Mahatma was considerably softened after his April 2 meeting with Mountbatten. He began to repeat, in the words of Azad, the arguments which Vallabhbhai Patel had already used in support of partition. "If even you have now adopted these views", Azad told Gandhi, "I see no hope of saving India from catastrophe".

SACRIFICED PRINCIPLES

This is a partial view; it is, in any case, a simplistic assessment of a very complex process. The full story of the process leading to the division of the country is yet to be written. But there is no doubt that in accepting partition, the Congress not only sacrificed its own cherished principles but also disregarded the wishes and interests of its Muslim supporters. The Congress Muslims, for example, were left high and dry. So was Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his band of Khudai Khidmatgars. And then there were countless families in different parts of the country who despite grave provocations, were not swept by the religious fervour and remained in India after partition.

Azad watched helplessly as the country moved towards the trauma of partition and the inevitable polarisation of Hindus and Muslims along communal lines. He was an isolated figure—almost alone among the Congress stalwarts in opposing the division of the country. Although he occupied centre stage in the crucial negotiations of the 1940's he carried no weight. He gained some leverage because of Gandhi and Nehru's backing but this was surely not enough to influence major Congress decisions.

Azad could also do little to stem the communal tide in his own community. Though never a leader with any mass following, his influence had steadily declined after the Muslim league emerged as a powerful political force in the late 1930's. He was highly individualistic and inhibited in his relationship with other leading Muslim Congressmen of his time. This imposed severe constraints on his ability to forge a powerful and united front against the Muslim League.

Azad's agony did not end after independence. He was incensed by the communal frenzy which accompanied partition and angrily indicted some of his Congress colleagues for inciting communal passions. Such was the atmosphpere that his own loyalty to the country came into question, and he had to defend himself and his community in Parliament. In a moving and brilliant speech he repeated what he had said at the height of India's freedom struggle.

I am proud of being an Indian, I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this nobel edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete.

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THE MAN WHO MOULDED MUSLIMS

RAVINDER KUMAR*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad occupies a distinctive position among those who led the struggle for freedom and attempted to lay the foundations of a secular society in India. He was also pre-eminent among nationalist Muslims, who fought for a united India; and who challenged the two-nation theory espoused by Mohammed Ali Jinnah, which traumatised the Muslim community in the subcontinent in the middle decades of 20th centry. Moreover, not only did Maulana Azad contest the concept of Pakistan in the secular domain, but as a distinguished theologian, he also embarked upon an exposition of the sacred texts of Islam, in order to demonstrate the moral legitimacy of India as a homeland for the Muslim community. Last but not the least, he was responsible for persuading the Muslims of India to participate in politics without fear of reservations after 1947; and in doing so, he provided the basis of a secular society in the country. Each of these achievements was a substantial contribution to the development of composite nationhood in India. Taken altogether they have earned for Maulana Azad a unique position among the leaders of the freedom struggle and among prominent nationalist Muslims in the subcontinent.

Azad's ancestors combined theological distinction with religious piety in a manner singularly appropriate for the role

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which he played on the political stage of India for five decades and more. He belonged to a family of Muslim divines, which had played a prominent part in the shaping of Islamic thought and culture within India, since the medieval centuries. His father, Maulana, Khairuddin was an individual who was deeply respected for his learning and piety is the Muslim community and he provided a classical education in theology, jurisprudence and philosophy to young Azad. Slightly later, Azad visited the famous Al-Azhar university of Cairo for a brief while. This visit inspired the legend—which has no basis in reality—that he was educated in Egypt.

The Muslim community in India underwent a serious ideological crisis at the turn of the century. Earlier during the last quarter of the 19th century, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan tried to persuade the Muslim elite that its political future lay in adopting a liberal outlook at the same time as it adopted a stance of co-operation *vis-a-vis* the British presence within the subcontinent. However, this call for an alliance imperialism was wholly unacceptable to large sections of the Muslim community in India, among the elite and the popular classes. In common with leaders like Mohammed and Shaukat Ali, Wazir Hasan and others, Maulana Azad, despite his tender years, represented those within the Muslim community who challenged the intellectual lead of Sir Syed. Instead, these leaders looked upon Great Britain as a European Power bent upon humiliating Islam in West Asia, at the same time as it sought to undermine the spiritual and secular status of Islam within the subcontinent. In the famous weekly, the *Al-Hilal*, Azad held out the message of nationalism to the Muslim elite as well as the popular classes, and urged them to join other communities in the epic struggle for the liberation of the country. Peihaps Azad was the most distinguished theologian among the Muslim leaders, of the first quarter of the 20th century, who espoused the cause of nationalism and joined Mahatma Gandhi in the struggle for swaraj launched in 1920. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to state that under the leadership of Azad, Maulana Abdul Bari and the Ali Brothers the so-called Khilafat movement reached out to all sections of Muslim society rich and poor, merchants and professionals, artisans and peasants, and mobilised them as an elemental force which shook the edifice of British rule to its very foundations.

The national movement entered a fresh phase in the 1930, which posed a novel challenge to men like Maulana Azad, who were wedded to the concept of a united India. After the heady days of the Khilafat and the Non-Co-operation movement, Hindu-Muslim unity proved unequal to the challenge of devising a constitution acceptable to all classes and community within the country. Indeed, although the 1930s again witnessed a country-wide agitation against British imperialism. Muslim participation in the agitation was not as conspicuous a feature of resistance to British rule as was true a decade earlier. Maulana Azad was among the few Muslim leaders who remained loyal to the cause of a united Hindu-Muslim struggle against British imperialism at this juncture.

The difference between the Indian National Congress, which claimed to represent *all* classes and communities, and the Muslim League, which sought to speak *exclusively* for Muslim opinion, continued to grow apace in the years following 1939. This is not the place to trace this growing cleavage; or to highlight the trajectory of events which led to the partition of the subcontinent at the same as India emerged as an independent polity. Suffice it to mention here that for most of this period Maulana Azad presided over the Congress with matchless grace and distinction. He also attempted, on a number of occasions to heal the rift between the Congress and the League. If he failed it was not for want of trying or for lack of political skills. The communal divide baffled even the great Mahatma, who attempted in wain in the 1940s to achieve what he had succeeded in achieving during the Khilafat and the Non-Co-operation movement.

Maulana Azad has argued in his memoirs. *India Wins Freedom*, that the final opportunity for preserving the unity of India was lost in 1946, during the course of negotiations with the Cabinet Mission for creating a three-tiered political structure for the subcontinent. The Maulana refers in particular to a speech made by Jawaharlal Nehru, wherein he observed that the Constituent Assembly, which was currently in the process of being convoked, would function as a fully sovereign body and not be constrained by any prior undertakings in devising a political system for India as to independent State.

MINORITIES FACTOR

The fact that Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders had reservations about the Cabinet Mission Plan is well-known. But the Maulana errs when he contends that Nehru's speech enabled the Muslim League to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan thus paving the way for the partition of India. Jawaharlal Nehru had specifically stated that the "only two factors which limit the sovereignty of the Constitution Assembly are those relating to the minorities and the Indo-British Treaty.

Any appraisal of Maulana Azad's contribution to modern India must, in conclusion, dwell upon the manner in which he reached out to the Muslim community after 1947, and persuaded it to play a constructive, role in the politics of the newly liberated state. Not surprisingly, the Muslims of India were deeply worried about their future within the country after the partition of the subcontinent. But the statesmanlike manner in which the Maulana reached out to his co-religionists, at this juncture, is vividly reflected in a speech he made in Delhi in 1948. Reminding the Muslim community of the destructive role played by leaders who had propagated the two nation theory he urged its members to address themselves anew to the business of creating for the world of Islam a place of dignity in the new order of things. "I am not asking you to seek certificates of loyalty out of the fear of the ruling power or to have as camp followers as you did during the days of foreign domination" observed the Maulana. "Let me remind you that some of the bright signs and symbols that you dreem today in India, as a heritage of the past, were contributed by our own forefathers. Don't forget them. Don't forsake them. Live like their worthy inheritors. Realise that if you yourself are not willing to run-away, no power on earth could make you do so."

"Notwithstanding minor differences Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru were closely tied to each other through long association in nationalist politics and through the shared value of secularism as the only basis of a creative society in India. Perhaps the regard which Jawaharlal extended to the Maulana is eloquenly reflected in the glowing tribute which he paid to him" on his death. "So we mourn today the passing of a great man, a man of luminous intelligence and mighty intellect, with an amazing

capacity to pierce through any problem to its core" he observed. The Prime Minister thus paid homage to Maulana and as a distinguished scholar, a gentleman and a great force for secularism in the country. Perhaps the Nation too, could today turn with profit to the social ideals which Maulana Azad espoused as the basis of sanity in relations between classes and communities in the decades which lie ahead.

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MAULANA AZAD AS I KNEW HIM

ANSAR HARVANI*

During the Quit India Movement, I was a prisoner in Alipur Central Jail, Calcutta and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was imprisoned along with other members of the Congress party in Ahmednagar Fort in Maharashtra. Towards the end of the Second World War the members of Congress Working Committee were sent to the jails of their respective provinces. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Narendra Deva and Pandit Pant were transferred to Bareilly jail, and the Maulana who belonged to Calcutta was sent to Bengal.

The Muslim League ministry of Bengal headed by Sir Nazimuddin, instead of keeping Maulana Azad in a regular jail, requisitioned the palace of a zamindar of Bankura, which was surrounded by walls higher than those of regular persons.

Since I was the solitary Muslim prisoner in Bengal, Mohammad Ali Bogra who later on became Prime Minister of Pakistan and who was Parliamentary Secretary to Sir Nazimuddin, asked me to give company to the Maulana and I readily agreed.

I spent more than two months with him before all the Congress leaders were released on the conclusion of the war and I can say it was a real education to me. I found him a versatile person having a thorough grasp over world history, literature and

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philosophy. He spent most of his time reading Arabic, Persian, French and English books on history, philosophy and literature. It was from him that I borrowed a copy of Marx's *Das Kapital* and read it.

Ahmed Mohiuddin, later on to be known by his pen-name Abul Kalam Azad, was born in 1889 in Mecca, a short distance from the holiest Muslim shrine of Kaba. His father Maulana Nooruddin was the only Muslim scholar to have been selected to teach the tenets of Islam in the holiest Muslim seminary of the world. Young Ahmed Mohiuddin learnt his alphabet in the birthplace of Prophet Mohammed, founder of the Islamic faith.

Maulana Azad's father's devoted desciples and followers persuaded him to come back to India and to accept to be the Imam of Calcutta, the then capital of British Indian Empire. Maulana Azad learnt his Urdu, Persian and Arabic from the prominent scholars of the day, and later left for Cairo, the oldest Islamic University of Ali Azher, for higher education in Arabic language and Muslim Theology. During his stay in Egypt he came in contact with leaders of Pan-Islamic Movement, who wanted to throw away the yoke of imperialism to free the Arab countries like Egypt, Morocco and Algeria.

NATIONAL MOVEMENT

On his return to Calcutta he established contact with revolutionary parties like Jugantar and Anusheelan. But these terrorist organisations were mostly based on the principles of Hindu revivalism and naturally Maulana Azad had no place in it.

The restless soul of young Maulana could not get peace by just reading Islamic history and theology and preaching it to faithfuls. He started writing literary and political articles for Urdu newspapers and journals under the pen-name of Abul Kalam Azad which later became his real name. From Calcutta he escaped from the shadow of his scholarly and dominating father to Lahore, where he joined the staff of daily *Paisa Akhbar*, the most widely circulated Urdu paper. In Lahore he came in contact with the revolutionaries like Sufi Amba Prasad, Sardar Ajit Singh, father of the celebrated revolutionary Bhagat Singh,

and Lala Har Dayal. In their company his sense of nationalism and patriotism was nursed.

On his return to Calcutta he launched his weekly *Al-Hilal*, the first and probably last Urdu paper to be published not on lithograph, but typesetting (phototype was not then known). *Al-Hilal* inspired a whole generation of Indian people, specially the Indian Muslims to work against imperialism. In 1914, on the outbreak of World War I, the British government banned its publication. He launched another paper. *Al-Bilagh*, but only a few issues of its publication came out and he was arrested and interned to Ranchi.

Now there was no going back for young Abul Kalam Azad. On his release from internment in 1920, he came in contact with Gandhiji and Ali Brothers and became a front row leader of Khilafat and Non-co-operation Movement. He joined the Indian National Congress and became a member of its Working Committee, which he continued to be till his death in 1958.

He toured the length and breadth of India and his powerful orations were eagerly awaited by huge crowds even in those regions where Urdu was not fully understood.

In 1923, he was elected to preside over the special session of the Congress held in Delhi. He was the youngest Congress President.

When the Congress launched Styagraha movement in 1930, Maulana Azad was arrested. In fact, he joined every direct action launched by the Congress and spent eleven years of his life in British jails.

CHALLENGING TASK

He accepted the most challenging assignment of his life when he became the President of the Congress in 1940 in Ramgarh, Gandhiji, whose nominee Pattabhi Sitaramayya was defeated in 1939 by Subhash Chandra Bose, wanted to have a consensus candidate. The entire left in the Congress supported Maulana Azad. Only M.N. Roy, an expelled member of third International, opposed him and badly lost.

Maulana Azad's tenure as Congress President was longest in the pre-independence history of the Indian Congress. He continued in this office till 1946. It was under his presidentship that

the All-Indian Congress Committee on August 8, 1942, passed the Quit India Resolution and gave the call of "Do or Die." The Congress movement was ruthlessly suppressed by British police and army and thousands of people were imprisoned and hundreds of people were shot dead and hanged.

On his release in 1945, he was entrusted with the most delicate task of negotiating with the British and the Muslim League for transfer of power to Indians.

He negotiated with Lord Wavel, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and was impressed by his sincerity to leave India. Later at Shimla he led the Congress delegation in talks with the Cabinet Mission headed by Sir Pethic Lawrence, the Secretary of State of India.

He wanted to meet Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah. But, in his arrogance, Mr. Jinnah wired him that he could not talk to a "Congress show boy." The Congress leaders were desperate to come to terms with the Muslim League and the Congress.

Lord Wavel was recalled and was succeeded by Lord Louis Mountbatten, a cousin of King George VI.

Lord Mountbatten, assisted by his charming wife, Edwina, managed to sell the idea of partition of the subcontinent to Nehru and Gandhiji, though reluctantly, blessed it.

Maulana Azad and his nationalist Muslim followers were heart-broken. The legendary Pathan leader, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who recently died, wept and exclaimed that he was thrown to wolves. Maulana Azad's dream of a united India was shattered and he was a broken man. But he kept a brave face and in his loyalty to his political colleagues he never lamented in public.

His deep affection for Jawaharlal continued as he worked in his government as Education Minister. It was he who founded the University Grants Commission and launched his pet organisation, the Indian Council of Cultural Relations. The academies to promote art, music and literature were his ideas. He assisted Jawaharlal Nehru in setting up the Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and a chain of science laboratories.

While he was lying on his deathbed on February 22, 1958, he caught hold of Jawaharlal Nehru and his fast words were "Jawahar Khuda Hafiz." Thus passed away a great giant of India's struggle for freedom.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was one of the greatest scholars, journalists, statesmen and above all a great human being. In the history of Islam he, along with Kemal At Turk will go down as the greatest social reformer of the twentieth century. He was one of the architects of Modern India and his secular ideas will aways inspire the future generations.

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MAULANA AZAD—A GREAT STATESMAN AND SCHOLAR

MIR MUSHTAQ AHMAD*

A great champion of freedom, democracy, secularism and nationalism, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad dominated the Indian scene for almost fifty years.

Descended from a family of religious divines, he was brought up and trained in keeping with the noble traditions of his family. The Islamic religion provoked in him right reaction against outmoded class divisions and mental obscurity. He stood for freedom and democracy. He played a vital role as a reformer and as a patriot which was a natural result of his deep study of Quran and other holy scriptures. It was a real surprise when orthodox Scholars brought up in ancient traditions responded first to the clarion call of Maulana Azad. The leaders of Jamait-ul-ulema were his earliest and most faithful followers.

FEARLESS JOURNALIST

The personality of Maulana Azad was unique in many respects. As in religion so in politics Maulana Azad searched his own path. On no road he travelled with the people of his age. At the age of sixteen, he started his paper, *Lisan-us-Sidq*. (The voice of truth). The great poet Maulana Hali would not believe

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that a young boy of sixteen could edit a paper so brilliantly.

In the year 1912 Maulana Azad started his paper *Al Hilal* (The Crescent). The paper made a great impact in the religious, social, and political circles of the time. It was a period of great political activities. The Britishers were determined to partition Bengal. Maulana Azad aroused the people particularly the Muslim community from its slumber. Through his fearless and bold writings in *Al Hilal*, he awakened the people and created in them a spirit and national unity and urge for freedom from the British Rule. Maulana Azad fought bravely against the anti-nationalist trends and carred the minority of Muslim intelligentsia with him.

In 1914, Maulana Azad had to close down *Al Hilal* because of forfeiture of security by Government. Therefore, he started another paper "Al Balagh" (The Message) in 1915. Through his forceful writings, he delivered the people from their narrow out-look and succeeded in instilling in them great enthusiasm to right against the British Rule.

PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS

Maulana Azad's writings in "Al Hilal" and "Al Balagh" disturbed the peace of British Government who sought to curb the papers in many ways. Finally, the Government interned the young Editor in an attempt to control his activities. In 1920 when Maulana Azad came out of internment, he was immediately recognised as a national leader in his own right and accepted as one of the first lieutenants of Mahatma Gandhi. At the age of 35 he became President of the Indian National Congress. Since then his life was closely identified with the Indian National struggle. Maulana Azad again became the President of Indian National Congress in 1940, in which position he continued till the year 1946.

His devotion to the country, his courage of conviction and sacrifice were unparalleled. He held fast to Hindu-Muslim unity and stood firmly like a rock. All sections of the country had a great love and respects for him. His advice was sought to resolve all complicated tangles and it was freely and frankly given without any fear or favour.

He continued as President during the most momentous

period of India-British relations when negotiations for transfer of power were being carried. He was the chief spokesman for the Congress in the talks with Sir Stafford Crips. In August 1942, he was arrested in the Quit India Movement and was kept in detention for three years.

In the year 1946 he conducted negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. No one in this country held the greatest position as President of the Indian National Congress for such a long period. The Congress trusted his wisdom and integrity and in the words of Dr. Rajendra Prasad : He came out like pure gold through this most trying ordeal when bulk of his co-religionists were ranged on the other side.

Although Maulana Azad was an eminent statesman and great patriot, he was also a great scholar. As a matter of fact Maulana Azad was more of a statesman than a diplomat. He had two unique qualities of having perfect balance and sobriety and his clarity of judgment. He inculcated right ideals and values among the people. His whole life was a shining example of sincerity and truth.

Maulana Azad published his book *Tarjuman al Quran* (Translation and Commentary on the Quran) in 1931. This book will for ever remain a unique publication both because of its new, humanistic interpretation of the Quran and its graceful and vivid style. By all standards, it is a masterpiece and a monument in the Urdu Literature. Maulana Azad laid special emphasis on the fact that, "We are all the creation of one God, who cherishes us and sustains us all."

Maulana Azad did most of his created work in prison. His letters written from prison are as beautiful as the colours on the wings of a butterfly. His open scattered pearls as well as hurled bolts. His writings showered petals as well as emitted sparks.

AS EDUCATION MINISTER

After the attainment of the independence, he was assigned the portfolio of Education and Scientific Research. During the period of six years, he gave great impetus and encouragement to the development of arts, literature, culture and scientific research. He established various academies and research institutions and solved many complex problems with great patience and

understanding. He was a rare force in Urdu literature and his writings will never cease to impress and inspire.

The greatest service which Maulana Azad did was to teach people of every religion that the true spirit of religion brings people together, creates understanding, forges unity and inspires service and sacrifice for others.

Maulana Azad's role in the achievement of Indian Independence is known to all, but his contributions as a man of letters is equally more splendid. He symbolised an age which was full of intense patriotism and steadfast loyalty to a great ideal.

History will record the fiery eloquence of his written and spoken speeches, his steadfast loyalty to ideals, his unflinching faith in communal unity, his scholarly statesmanship and his service to the great Indian people for half a century.

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REMEMBERING MAULANA AZAD

P.D. TANDON

Those who were born after India became free do not seem to fully realise what heroic roles their leaders played in getting freedom for their country. In the crowded galaxy of great patriots the name of Maulana Azad shines with lustre all his own. At the age of 16 he was a rebel and when he was about 20 he was a great scholar and had deep knowledge of theology. Intellectually and temperamentally, he was an aristocrat, but he spent his whole life in the service of the people. When Gandhiji in 1916 during the world war, was a "loyalist", the Maulana was a rebel and his paper *Al-Hilal* denounced the British Raj in powerful terms. His paper was closed down by the Government and he was interned at Ranchi. His father was a religious head and Azad was supposed to succeed him, but he declined the honour and the privilege.

Azad had a powerful memory. He greatly enjoyed music. He was a matchless orator, a spellbinder par excellence. His speeches were full of thought and vehemences. From his steps flowed the Urdu language "without a break or a drop, each syllable in its exact place and order, each sentence following a cadence of its own, so inevitably that one could follow its rise and its fall, like the movement of rolling billows on a calm sea."

George Eilot has said that only two things vitally interest men—religion and politics. It was a rare distinction for Azad that he was deeply interested in both. It is difficult to say whether

a profoundly religious man had strayed into politics, or a great politician, due to various circumstances, got immensely interested in religion. In both the realms, he did wonderfully well.

To meet Maulana Sahib was to be acquainted with real culture and refinement. His tall and majestic figure reminded one of the princes of old. He inspired respect, but there was a certain aloofishness in him which discouraged people to be familiar with him. He was sensitive to a fault and one had to be very cautious while dealing with him.

Azad in his early days had acquired great reputation as a poet also. Some persons believed that what he composed was not his work. One day Azad was seeing some publications in a book-stall that a disciple of Ghalib, named Nadir Khan, entered the shop and said, "You recite remarkable poems at Mushairas, but how can I believe that a young lad like you can compose such beautiful and high class couplets ? I personally think that someone else writes for you. Today I will test you here and now. Come along ! The 'Tarah' is *Yaad na ho, shaad na ho, abaad na ho.* Now you compose."

This greatly hurt Azad, but he controlled his anger and reeled out couplet after couplet. Nadir Khan, the detractor, became a great admirer on the spot. He was so impressed by Azad's genius that he lost all sense of propriety and decorum and started dancing and shouting in the shop. "Shubhanallah ! Shubhanallah !

Azad was a great lover of books, and he owned a huge library. He did not speak English, but could understand it very well. His range of reading was very wide. "The world's greatest thinkers were all there in his library—Goethe, Spineza, Marx, Havalook Ellis, there were the Upanishads and the Vedas. There were all the volumes of the people of the nations, historians, history, international library of famous literature, and so on. He had with his voratious appetite read all the Waverly novels and everything of Dumas, and Hugo, Tolstoy and Ruskin he had read more than once."

Azad was imprisoned several times and cheerfully faced all the perils and privations that life meant in those days. During one of his trials Azad eloquently and prophetically stated. "The historian is waiting for us and so is the future. Let us come here quickly, one followed by the other and you in your turn continue

to pass judgment with the same rapidity. For some days this will go on, and then the time will come when another and a higher court will sit in judgment. That court will be guided by the laws of God. Time will be its judge."

Azad's smart, penetrating eyes finished forth brilliance. He was incapable of mixing with all and sundry. His biographer, Mahadev Desai, wrote : "His absorption in his studies has given him a kind of predilection to loneliness and though he was most affable and even deferential, he had very few friends. Though a finished conversationalist, he inclined most towards reticence."

Azad was an early riser, and a great lover of China tea. He preferred solitude, if he could not have the choice company. He himself had written : "From the very beginning, the bent of my mind has been such that I desire loneliness and avoid associations. Obviously the demands of the engagements of life cannot benefit such a wild temperament. So I have to habituate myself to public associations always demurring.

In 1904, an Association of Muslims in Lahore invited Azad to given a discourse on a difficult religious topic. Those who invited him had never seen him, but were familiar with his high reputation as a scholar and a journalist. When he reached Lahore to address the conference, people thought that the son of Azad had come and the father would follow. When they knew that the young lad was Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, they were greatly astonished When he spoke, their surprise know no bounds. His was a masterly performance. In the audience were such distinguished scholars and poets as poet Hali, great Urdu writer Nazir Ahmed, and poet Iqbal. Poet Hali described Azad as "an old head on young shoulders."

Azad was born in Meeca on November 11, 1888. As a Quran scholar he was unrivalled. His father Khairuddin had no faith in Western education and this was why Azad was never sent to any English School. He was educated at home by his learned father and his friends. When he was five, he came to Calcutta and was educated there at some religious school. Many writers have frequently stated that Azad studied at Al-azhar University in Cairo. It is not true. Jawaharlal Nehru had called it "an extraordinarily persistence of error of wide circulation."

Azad was a highly cultured person. He was aristocratic by temperament. Elegance and grace were his strong points. His

to have his meal in his room. Once in London too he had his dinner in the hotel room though it cost a neat sum. He hardly ever attended parties given by Prime Minister or President.

Nehru was very keen to include Krishna Menon in the Cabinet and he naturally consulted his senior colleague Azad. He was dead set against it. Nehru several times visited the Maulana and tried to persuade him to agree to the proposal, but he was adainant. He went even so far as to say that he would like to retire as he was old and he may be replaced by Menon. This Nehru could never do. One day a close associate of Azad told him that Nehru respected almost all his wishes and he should now yield and let Nehru include Menon in the Cabinet when he was to keen on it. Azad sat twirling his moustache and said that he would not like to disappoint Nehru, but the proposal did not go down his throat. A few days after when Nehru again visited Azad then as a friendly gesture to Nehru he agreed to Menon's inclusion in the Cabinet.

Once Dr. Rajendra Prasad, when he was President, wanted to call on Azad and say 'Id Mubarak' to him. The news was conveyed to Azad and he said that he and Rajendra Prasad were old friends and Rajendra Babu need not take the trouble of coming to him for a formal visit. When Rashtrapati Bhawan officials were told about it they were upset. It was something against protocol. One of them told Azad's secretary that it was an unheard of thing that the President wanted to call on the Minister and he was reluctant to receive him. When this was conveyed to Azad, he stated, "Achha, Mere Bhai aane do, Takallaf ki kya zarurat hai." (Alright brother, let him now come. This formality is not necessary). The President came and warmly and affectionately greeted Azad on the Id Day. Azad hardly ever called on President or Prime Minister to greet them on their birthdays.

Azad was a great thinker and a shrewd judge of men. Almost all the complicated problems of Congress and quarrels of Congress leaders were referred to him for settlement. He did not mind missing a meeting of the Cabinet, but he attended the meetings of Congress Working Committee as far as possible. It was a delight to hear him talk on a variety of subjects. His friends, the late Mr. Asaf Ali, had written, "In congenial company, he is a sparkling conversationalist with a rare sense of humour. When

not in his element he was capable of almost oppressive reticence. He can be devastating in debate and convincing in discussion for he makes apt use of the enormous storehouse of his erudition."

Azad was a man of luminous intelligence. He had a capacious mind and a heroic soul. Paying a tribute to him Jawaharlal Nehru had said, "We have had great men and we will have great men but I do submit that peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else. . . a man of luminous intelligence and mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core." He was really one of the ablest and the finest of our leaders during the Gandian era.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : A SHORT SURVEY OF STUDIES IN BENGALI

A.B. ABUL HASNAT*

Across the veil of a century stands a man towering above many with his Himalayan height in scholarship and political pragmatism, in his unusually liberal interpretation of religions without denying them, particularly of Islam, and in his profound faith in the philosophy of humanism and secularism. This is Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. "Azad" was not his idle takhallus of rheotrical poetry; it was the symbol of a free soul which Azad ever kept afire and animated with the deepest conviction of truth. The biography and thinking of Azad is ever an enduring subject of speculation; but literature on Azad is not as vast and varied as his arresting personality demanded. A doctoral thesis on his thought which comes out in a book-form, *Abul Kalam Azad: Intellectual and Religious Biogragphy* from Oxford University Press by Ian Henderson Douglas covers some important aspects in his life and thinking, although it is a guarded appreciation. But the dearth of literature in Bengali is certainly not an agreeable reaction to the salutary impact of such a powerful thinker.

Biographies

So far as I know the first biography of Azad in Bengali was written by Professor Rezaul Karim. The book was *Manshi*

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Maulana Abul Kalam Azad—Abul Kalam Azad, the great intellectual. The book was first published in 1942 by his elder brother, late Moinuddin Hossain of Noor Library, Calcutta, who copiously contributed towards enrichment of nationalist Bengali literature by Muslims in the beginning of the 20th century. Before that some earlier chapters of the book were published in *Desh,* a distinguished Bengali weekly (24-1-42, 14-2-42, and 7-3-42). The book went through its second edition in 1948. Another edition of the book was published from Dacca (then East Pakistan) in 1958 with some portions disagreeable to the Muslims of the then East Pakistan, left out.

This book, like the biography by Rishi Das (to which I am coming shortly) was largely modelled on the biography by Mahadev Desai in English. The book with its well-arranged eleven chapters has tried to do justice to the genius of Azad. In his introduction with a bold brush Professor Karim has painted Azad as a Mujaddid (renovator) of the 20th century. He makes a famous distinction between Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Maulana Azad : the former with all his revolutionary and dynamic role as a reformer took British rule as a blessing of God, and the latter with his more penetrating interpretation of Islam and the Quran was ever a fighter for freedom from British domination. From the beginning to the end this biography is a gradual unfolding of a genius which Rezaul Karim presents to his readers like a convincing story with a graceful movement. The book is appended with an extract from a long essay (original Urdu and its Bengali rendering are given) published in *Al-Hilal,* 10th December, 1912.

Another full-fledged biography of *Abul Kalam Azad* was written by Mr. Rishi Das, a renowned biographer of many celebrated Bengalees and some foreigners. It was published by Orient Book Company on the 15th August, 1958. The book was introduced by Professor Humayun Kabir. That short introduction by Professor Kabir highlights some of the basic qualities in the character of Azad. In the last paragraph of his introduction, pointing out the merit of this biography. Professor Kabir refers to the fact that it contains some mistakes in the biographical details, as the book was based on Mahadev Desai's biography of Azad. For example, Rishi Das relates—like Rezaul Karim in his biography (p. 21), Pattabhi Sitaramaya in *History of the Indian National*

Congress, Vol. II (p. 168), Nehru in *The Discovery of India* (p. 347) —that Azad studied in Al-Azhar University. But Azad's own statement in *India Wins Freedom* (p. 6) contradicts the narrative details presented by the authors referred to.

Rishi Das's book is divided into eleven chapters followed by an index. It is mainly a political biography; incidentally, he refers to his early poetic and journalistic career. But it was not possible for him to assess his unusually vast range of scholarship, sacred and secular. He refers to the emergence of future Azad from his great oratory, "On the Rational Foundation of Religion." This book has nobly assessed Azad's role as a unifying force between Hindus and Muslims of India at a very critical moment when its destiny was going to be shaped. The last part of chapter 9 is magnificent. He says that Azad was the true hero of the Tragedy of Partition :

> "The great marble palace of his life-long ideal of Hindu-Musalman fraternity was shattered to pieces; his dream of the undivided India was destroyed and demolished. Still, even in the midst of this enormous fall, of this saddest defeat, he remained to be, just like a tragic hero, grand even in failure, dazzling even in deepest agony, a sojourner without any comrade with mighty loneliness."

Another book on the life and activities of Azad was Mr. Moyezuddin Ahmad's *Bharater Swadhinata O Maulana Azad* (India's Freedom and Maulana Azad) published from Quran Prachar Samiti, Calcutta in 1974. It was practically enlargement and compilation of his different essays on Azad published in instalments in the Quran Prachar magazine right from 1968, as stated by the author himself. The book was mainly based on Azad's *India Wins Freedom*, and in as many as 14 chapters presents a racy life-history of Azad, though not a penetrating assessment of his personality so that he might stand out in a different soil with immense relevance to modern appeal. Still the author's sincere love and devotion to Azad transcends this limitation in vision and approach to the luminous personality of Azad.

Shorter Articles on Azad

After Azad's death in February, 1958, the Bengali Weekly

Desh published one poem by Sanjoy Bhattacharya and one essay by Jagadananda Bajpayee in memory of Azad. The short poem by Sanjoy Bhattacharya, "Maulana Abul Kalam Azad" in a very restrained emotion of modern poetry compares Azad to a snow-capped mountain top, which blesses the earth with rich gifts and silently enjoys its own contribution. He further compares Azad to clouds with stately height whose soul is lacerated by Thunder, but which melts into pity to rejuvinate an extended "waste-land." The analogy is singularly revealing and it seems to be a faint, though unconscious echo of the German poet Goethe's tribute to Hazrat Muhammad (peace be on him) in "Mahomet's Gesang" composed in 1774.

In the same volume of *Desh* there is an essay "Maulana Azad Smarane" (In memory of Maulana Azad) by Jagadananda Bajpayee. In very simple well-arranged utterances, the writer pays his homage to a great fighter for freedom and for Hindu Muslim unity and brotherhood which assumed a significant dimension in his time.

Professor Humayun Kabir whose name was associated with Azad's in the composition of *India Wins Freedom* contributes much to the understanding of Azad in Bengali. His Bengali translations of Azad's *Tazkira* (Biogragphy) were published serially in *Chaturanga*—(a prestigious journal started jointly by himself and Ataur Rahman)—from Magh—Chaitra 1364 (Bengali) to Magh—Chaitra, 1365 (B). His Bengali translation of Azad's article on the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was published in the same journal in Baisakh—Asar issue, 1364 (B). The introduction written by Maulana Azad to the *History of Philosophy : Eastern and Western* edited by Dr. Radhakrishnan was translated by Prof. Kabir and was published in *Chaturanga* with the caption, "Darshaner Marma"—Meaning of Philosophy. But not merely translations; he paid a very soulful tribute to Azad in *Visva Bharati Patrika* (Bengali) in Magh-Chaitra issue, 1364 (B). He referred to the amazing scholarship of Azad and also his political sanity and sagacity.

Professor Rezaul Karim's article on Azad in "Compass," a Bengali weekly edited by Mr. Pannalal Dasgupta, a few years back, equally attests his profound regard for the Maulana. Mr. Khazim Ahmed's article on Azad in *Paigam* (Bengali) on 5th March, 1968, is a good general introduction to Azad's many

sided genius. It is a sincere, though naive, expression of his deep love for Azad.

Historians of freedom-movement generally refer in their books to Azad's role in nationalist struggle, but these books find no scope to go deep into the full personality of Azad,—they piece together some moments of brief brilliance in his life. Mr. Satyen Sen's Book *British Birodhi Swadhinata Sangrame Musalmander Bhumika* (The role of Musalmans in Anti-British struggle for Independence), published in 1986, from Jatiya Sahitya Prakashani, Dacca, includes a small biography of Azad. Before Independence the famous Bengali writer Nripendra Krishna Chatterjee wrote a booklet meant for Children : *Moslem Jatir Karmabir* (Dedicated workers of the Muslim Community) which included a small biography of Azad. Professor Amalendu De in his *Pakistan Prastab O Fazlal Haque* (Pakistan proposal and Fazlul Haque) passingly refers to the historic Presidential speech of Azad at Ramgarh in 1940. Professor De records the reactions of A.K. Fazlul Haque to this magnificent speech. Fazlul Haque did not frown at Azad's theory of undivided nationalistic entity of Hindus and Muslims, but pointed out that Azad's speech was partially opposed to Muslim interest as he did not share the anxiety of Muslims in consequence of their peculiar position as the minority. Of course, the sympathy of Professor De is always with Azad, though he does not fail to place Fazlul Haque against proper background. To him this Presidential speech of Azad was unique and unparalleled (p. 56).

In the year 1988, observing the birth-centenary of Maulana Azad, some Bengali dailies published some articles on Azad. But they fail to penetrate into the soul of Azad, as they are conditioned by peculiar demand of dailies. The articles—one by Mr. Hussainur Rahman in *Desh* (30-4-1988), though not a full-fledged article, one by Mr. Pulaknarayan Dhar (a review of the biography of Azad by Douglas) in *Chaturanga*, one by Professor Amalesh Tripathi in *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, and one by Mr. Ladlimohan Roychowdhury in *Jugantar*, among others, with their varied degrees of interest in Azad are attempts to fill in the gap.

This year (1990) Mr. Azharuddin Khan wrote a survey of studies on Azad in Bengali in the Special issue of a Bengali monthly *Qalam* published in Calcutta. The article gives a wide

coverage to the various studies on Azad in Bengali in East and West Bengal, before and after Independence. It also gives a balanced and critical assessment of the Azad Commemoration Volume of *Durbikshan*, a Bengali quarterly.

The present writer gracefully acknowledges the receipt of some informations from this article by Azharuddin in addition to those already collected.

Translation

I shall be failing in my duty if I miss to mention some works of Azad having been translated into Bengali. When Azad was in Ahmadnagar Jail he wrote some letters to his dear friend Nawab Habibur Rahman Shirwani. But the letters were not posted, for he was not allowed to correspond with anybody. When he was set free, he advised his secretary to keep with him the duplicate copies of the letters and to send the originals to the person concerned. But his secretary, marvelled by the artistic beauty and literary polish of the epistles, compiled them into a book, and it came out as *Ghubar-i-Khatir*. After Azad's death, a book with 9 letters out of them translated into Bengali was published in 1960 in the then East Pakistan. The Bengali rendering was named *Angabihin Alingan*—an embrace without any bodily touch. Two chapters out of these Bengali renderings were reprinted in the weekly *Desh* in 1962 in two consecutive instalments; the two chapters were "Charuer Sange Larai"—Quarrel with a Sparrow. On page 13, in the translation *Angabihin Alingan* some lines from a Tagore song—"Madhura tomar shesh je na pai"—(O dear beloved, I fail to have an end to thy charm) are quoted, and the phrase "Angabihin Alingan" was adopted from this stanza as the title of the translation. Azad brightened his original epistles by occassional reference to Arabic and Persian classics like Sadi and Hafiz and Abul Ala Maarri, the famous blind poet in Arabic literature. The translator gives Bengali translation of all the quoted lines accompanied with Bengali rendering.

Ashabe Kahaf was first rendered into Bengali in July 1976 and was published from Banglabazar, Dacca. The book was introduced by Late Dr. Enamul Haque, the noted historian of Bengali literature, and the then Director, Bangla Academy, Dacca. Both Dr. Haque and the translator Mr. Akhtar Farooq in the preface, acknowledge Azad to be a great genius and a powerful

writer who made Urdu prose both sinewy and sonorous.

Insaniyat Maut Ke Dawarze Par was first translated as *Mrityur Duare Manabata*—Humanity at the Door of Death—and published from the then East Pakistan. Another version was known as *Jiban Sadhyai Manabata.* Professor Abdul Ghafur edited a book in Bengali, *Saswata Nabi* (Eternal Prophet) in 1980. That included a Bengali translation of *Azad's Insaniyat Maut Ke Darwaze Par* by Abdullah bin Sayeed Jalalabadi.

India Wins Freedom first translated into Urdu by Mr. Rayees Ahmed Jafri, the celebrated biographer of Mr. Jinnah. It was not a page to page translation, but it was largely edited with notes punctuating the noble utterances of a man never bribcd into political gain or personal fame. The translator could not shake off his own political prejudices (for, he belonged to Muslim League) which occasionally clouded the image of a scholar deciphering the political writing on the wall. Of course, on many occasions he acknowledged the greatness of Azad as a powerful thinker. That Urdu book was rendered into Bengali by Maulana Abdullah bin Sayeed Jalalabadi from Banglabazar, Dacca in 1979. He was also a League man, but he did not allow himself to be frittered away by excess of narrow political sentiments and prejudices. He ranks Azad with the greatest thinkers and has negated many opinions of Mr. Jafri as faulty in judgment. Anyway, it is a welcome addition to honour the bookshelf of a liberal scholar.

Here in West Bengal an abridged Bengali translation of *India Wins Freedom* was done by Indu Bhusan Das and published from Patraput, Calcutta (1383, Bengali). The second and complete translation was done by the poet Snbhas Mukherjee and was published from Orient Longman, Calcutta, in 1989. In both cases the Bengali caption is *Bharat Swadhin Holo.*

A distinguished scholar and a theologian Azad was a great interpreter of the Holy Quran. In this *Tarjuman Quran,* particularly in Surah "*Al-Fatiha,*" for which his name will be enshrined as a profound Islamologist in the history of tafsir, he leaves every mark of great scholarship with a poet's vision, a historian's imagination and disarming logic of a philosopher. His interpretation of divine Rahmat and Rububiyat is among the best philosophical literatures reminding us of Ibn-i-Sina and St. Thomas Acquinas. The first volume, i.e., Surah *Fatiha* was translated

into Bengali as *Ummul Quran* by Akhtar Farooq and was published from Bangla Academy, Dacca, in 1966.

Azad's *Afsana-e-Hijr wa Wisal* becomes *Je Satyer Mirtyu Nei*—Truth that knows no Death. The translation was first published from Islamia Library, Dacca in 1966; the second edition was published from Book Society, Dacca. And the third edition by Akhtar Faroeq was published from Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh in 1987.

From Adabistan, Lahore, an interesting book *Mazamin-e-Al-Hilal* was published. It was a collection of five articles published in different issues of *Al-Hilal*. The first essay of the book is "*Sada-e-Haque*" and the second essay is "Dawat-e-Haque." These two essays were translated into Bengali as *Satyer Dak*—Call of Truth, and was published from Habibiya Book Depot, Dacca, first in 1980; the second edition came out in 1985.

The Bengali translation of *Tazkirah* and other essays of Azad by Professor Humayun Kabir has already been referred to.

Letters are always revealing, and they peep into the inner universe of great thinkers. And for a genius with an extensive world to work in, letters have always the status of primary sources. It is equally true in case of Azad. His letters, like those of great poets and great thinkers of the world in all ages, are not merely rare specimens of literary polish and workmanship, but they speak much about Azad's personal belief and philosophy, the meaningful history of his development from *Al-Hilal* days upto maturity, his ideological and theological agreement and disagreement with the leading Maulanas. These letters were written on different occasions to the distinguished poet Hali (author of the celebrated *Musaddas*), Allama Shibli Numani, Maulana Abul Majed Dariabadi, etc. Mr. Ghulam Rasul Mihr, a great friend and lover of Azad, had compiled all these letters and included them in the first chapter of his *Tabarrukat-e-Azad*. Prof. Akhtar Farooq translated these letters into Bengali and published them as *Azad Patrabali* (Letters of Azad) from Islamic Foundation of Bangladesh, Dacca, in 1989. He has edited the letters marvellously; the occasional notes and references, supplied by him, to contemporary events and personalities have made the entire volume meaningful and rewarding.

In this connection let me say a word or two regarding the contribution of Prof. Akhtar Farooq towards introducing Azad

to the Bengali reading public. The Islamic chapter of the Maulana's life, his broad vision of tolerance taught by Islam, his profound interpretation of the Quran—all these are brought home to us through the extensive labour of Prof. Farooq These translations help us make an assessment of Azad's personality as a "Majma'ul Bahrain"—mingling of two occeans—both Islamic and Indian, both sacred and secular.

Qaul-i-Faisal (The Last Verdict) was a wonderful piece of composition Azad : it was an emphatic and forceful self-defence against the charge of sedition framed by the British Government in 1921. The booklet was immediately translated into English which Gandhiji had read and defended as "the most forceful and truthful statement offered by a satyagrahi." That booklet was translated into Bengali as *Dak Diya Jai* (I give out a call to all) in 1960 by Mosharraf Hossain from Jawel Library, Dacca. It is interesting to note in this connection that a distinguished revolutionary poet of Bengal, Qazi Nazrul Islam, sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment by the British Government, made an almost equally forceful, though much shorter, self-defence known as "Rajbandir Zabanbandi" in 1922, just one year after Azad's *Qaul-i-Faisal*. The surprising affinity not only in spirit and content, but at some places in allusions and phraseology, lead us to an interesting conclusion : Qazi Nazrul's "Zabanbandi" bears the stamp of reading Azad's *Qaul-i-Faisal*, although there is no written, direct and primary evidence in favour of this hypothesis. I have examined almost all the circumstancial evidences in my Bengali article in *Maulana Azad Centenary Commemoration Volume* published in 1989 from Berhampore, Murshidabad, West Bengal, perhaps the only one of its kind in Bengali.

Some other Bengali translations published in the then East Pakistan and some after the emergence of Bangladesh are as follows :

1. *Saharate Futla Re Ful* (A Flower was blossomed at Sahara). Translation : Tazaqalam (Musharraf Hossain): City Publishers, Dacca, 1960.
2. *Viswanabir Abirbhab* (The Advent of the World-Prophet). Translation . Nuruddin Ahmed; Sarshina Aliya Madrasah Library, 1960.
3. *Eider Paigam* (The Message of Eid).

Translation : Mujibur Rahman, Islamia Library, Dacca, 1962.

4. *Eldain*
   Translation : Aminul Islam.
   Dacca Quran Manzil.
5. *Hazrat Eusouf*
   Translation : Md. Abdul Awwal.
   Dacca Quran Manzil, 1962.
6. *Hazrat Eusouf*
   Translation : Syed Abdul Mannan
   Mehbub Publishing, Dacca, 1962.
7. *Hazrat Eusouf*
   Translation : Akhtar Farooq, Kitabghar, Dacca, 1962.
8. *Deladate Nabi* :
   Translation : Akhtar Farooq, Islamia Library, Dacca, 1963.
9. *Islam O Pashchatya Ganatantra* (Islam and Western Democracy).
   Translation : Nuruddin Ahmed, Latif Book Corporation, Dacca, 1963.
10. *Viswanabir Ofat* (Insaniyat Maut Ke Darwaze Par).
    Translation : Nuruddin Ahmed, Islamia Library, Dacca, 1965.
11. Baiganik Drishtite Nari (Women in the light of Science).
    Translation : Ajibul Islam.
    Ashrafia Library, Dacca, 1965.
    It is partically the Bengali version of Urdu translation *Musalman Aurat* by Maulana Azad from the Arabic original *Al-Maratul Muslima* by Farid Afandi.
12. *Masjide Rajniti* (Politics in the Mosque).
    Translation : Akhtar Farooq, Dacca, 1977.

Commemoration Volume

The first issue of a Bengali quarterly journal "*Durbikshan*" came out in December 1989 as Maulana Azad Centenary Commemoration Volume. Though the issue was bi-lingual, Bengali section contained major portion of articles, memoirs, speeches and Bengali translation of some of Azad's writings. Some articles are really illuminating. The motto of this special Azad Number was to identify the role of Azad in giving a shape to the concept of

harmony of cultures, religious tolerance and national integration. According to the distinguished Bengali daily *Ananda Bazar Patrika* it was an honest attempt at compensation for ignorance about Azad at the present generation when the passion of disharmony ran high. The articles and memoirs were compiled and edited by the present writer (of this article) and published in December 1989 at Berhampore, Murshidabad, West Bengal. The second issue of the journal (Jan-March, 1990) contained the Bengali translation of the famous speech of Azad at Visva-Bharati, when he inaugurated it as a Central University in 1951.

In conclusion, let me pay my homage to Azad in words which are enfeebled by the epic grandeur of his personality. The fun is that the reaction of a Bengalee is rendered in English. A mighty symbol of national integration and harmony. Azad made his presence felt everywhere when our political horizon was threatened with formidable clouds. Again and again he pushed them away with lusty strokes and helped us to breathe under the azure sky. But we should not stop here. He was a restless soul ever struggling, like Prometheus, to offer spark of fire and light to humanity at large. To ignore this soul is to ignore sweetness and light. His writings are among the world classics in the sanity of vision and masculinity of a profound creator. It is our deep debt of obligation, here in West Bengal, to translate him in Bengali as well as in other regional languages, though like a forgiving father he will ever smile at our tiny troubles to give him an alien dress. Still learned institutions like Urdu Academy and Sahitya Academy have much to do in this respect. For Azad is a mighty dreamer, as all master minds have always been, with his noble ideas never fully translated into reality, but ever alluring us for translation. The greatness of a dream lies not in fulfilment, but in its birth itself.

My thousand salaam to Maulana Azad.

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MAULANA AZAD AND URDU**

RAISUDDIN FARIDI*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was born in Mecca in 1888. His father Maulana Khairuddin had migrated from Delhi to Mecca years back due to the political atmosphere then prevalent in the country. He was well versed in Arabic and Islamic studies and had full command over Urdu as well; but his wife, Alia whom he had married in Mecca, was a lady of pure Arab nobility and knew Arabic language only. The mother-tongue of Azad was thus Arabic.

About 1895 A.D. the whole family consisting of Maulana Khairuddin, his wife, their three or four daughters and two sons came to Calcutta for the treatment of the fractured bone of Maulana Khairuddin; and they settled here permanently. Maulana Khairuddin made special arrangements for the education of his children and more so for the younger son Mohiuddin, the most brilliant of all his children, who was destined to be at a later stage one of the greatest orators, thinkers, writers, authors and national leaders.

Maulana Azad received education in Arabic language and the traditional courses of Quran, Hadees, Tafsir, Theology, Logic, Philosophy and many other branches of learning. He also achieved proficiency in the language and literature of Urdu, Arabic

*Editor, Rozana Hind, Calcutta.

**Summary of the Paper in Urdu read at the Seminar on Maulana Azad held at the Iran Society, on 27-11-1988.

and Persian. He took special interest in developing his knowledge of Urdu and decided to use it as the main vehicle for spreading his message to the masses in general and Muslims in particular. He adopted this language for the interpretation of Islam, Quran, History and Philosophy and to awaken the Muslims for taking part in the struggle for the emancipation of the country from the British yoke.

He started his career as a poet and brought out at a very early age two magazines on Urdu poetry, *Almisbah* and *Nairang-i-Khayal*, at the beginning of the present century A.D. In 1903, he started a serious type of journal called *Lisanus Sidq* (Language of Truth) for social reform and soon established himself as a first class Urdu writer. He was invited to Lucknow to edit the well known monthly *Al-nadwah* published by the famous centre of Islamic learning, Nadwatul Ulema-i-Islam. After six months, he shifted himself to a wider field of journalism and accepted the editorship of the important tri-weekly news and views newspaper *Wakeel* of Amritsar. He was at that time recognised as the top-most Urdu journalist and the leader of revolutionary journalism. After some time he left for Calcutta to start his own newspaper, *Darussaltanat* (The seat of the Empire), but he had to face much trouble in expressing his revolutionary ideas against the old customs and the un-Islamic practises that prevailed among the Muslims in the name of Islam. He had, therefore, to close it down within three months. All these happened between the years 1901 and 1907, when he was only a teenager. His father died in Calcutta in 1908. Before his death he wanted Azad to take his place as a religious saint, but young Azad refused to live an artificial life although it could be a life of great honour and comfort for him. He decided to lead a life of hardship and struggle instead.

In 1912 he started his famous Urdu weekly *Alhilal* from Calcutta, through which he gave a clarion call to the Indian Muslims to give up their idle life and to join the struggle for freedom and independence of the country along with their Hindu brethren. His powerful voice touched the cords of the hearts of Indian Muslims. What he wrote in *Alhilal* had never been written in Urdu before and it is still matchless. The British rulers soon stopped the publication of *Alhilal*. Thereafter Azad brought out another weekly named *Albalagh*. In no time he was interned at

Ranchi and a lot of his writings were destroyed by the Police. In Ranchi he started writing his famous Commentary of the Holy Quran in Urdu named *Tarjumanul Quran.* After his release he plunged himself headlong in the national politics and started using his tongue more than his pen.

Since his young age, Azad was not only a progressive thinker and writer of a high standard but also a superb conversationalist. Though not fond of public speeches, yet when time came he used to deliver excellent extempore speeches captivating the minds of huge audiences specially of the learned and intelligent listeners. No doubt, he was the greatest orator in Urdu of all times. It was impossible to imitate him in writing or in speaking.

One of his earliest publications was a booklet on the topic of entry of non-Muslims in mosques. His another booklet was on the rights of women in Islam. His masterpiece was the *Qaule Faisal* (The last Word), a statement made in the court after his first arrest during the non-cooperation movement. Meanwhile, he partly completed his famous *Tarjumanal Quran* (Commentary of the Holy Quran) which changed the old ideas about the relationship between different religions and their followers. During his last imprisonment (1942-45) he wrote several letters which were later on published in 1946 in a book form named *Ghubar-i-Khatir.* This is his another literary master-piece. Last but not the least, *India Wins Freedom,* narrated by him in Urdu and translated by his trusted lieutenant Prof. Humayun Kabir in English, was published after his death. An Address on the subject of Khilafat and its importance to Islam and his two presidential addresses for Congress Sessions originally written in Urdu are also the masterpieces of politics. To tell the truth, the Maulana enriched the Urdu literature to such an extent that it may rightly claim to be an international language.

It was nearly impossible to support Urdu language after the partition of the Sub-Continent, but through the efforts and the strong support of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Urdu was included in the constitutional list of national languages.

Azad saved big centres of Urdu studies like Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Milliah Islamiah of New Delhi from total destruction at the hands of non-Muslim immigrants from the newly created Pakistan. His own efforts to stop the exodus of Muslims from India are also a part of history.

Now wher the year long centenary celebrations of the Maulana's birth are being held on national level we hope that the Urdu language so dear to him will get a new lease of life and the duststorm raised against Urdu will subside.

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MAULANA AZAD AND CALCUTTA**

S.M.H. BURNEY*

Maulana Azad was a many splendoured and multi-faceted personality. He was at once a great scholar, a distinguished writer, a powerful orator, an ardent patriot, a zealous freedom-fighter, and a great leader with tenacious determination, a rare sagacity and a prophetic vision.

It is in the fitness of things that a suitable function befitting this great son of India should have been organized in Calcutta, a city with which he had long, warm and abiding relationship. Although he was born in Mecca, he spent his early life in Calcutta where his father had settled in 1898 when he was about 9 years old. His education started at Mecca and was continued at Calcutta. It was here that his journalistic career began and blossomed into a national phenomenon. At the incredible age of 11, he became the youngest editor of a monthly poetic journal *Nairang-e-Alam* in 1899 which continued for eight months. In January, 1901 he founded another journal *Al-Misbah*, a weekly, which survived for about four months. Early in 1902/1903 he was associated with *Ahsan-ul-Akhbar*, a weekly edited by Maulvi Ahmed Hussain Fathpuri. It was in the office of this journal that Maulana Azad gained an opportunity to study Arabic newspapers

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**This is the Address delivered by Mr. S.M.H. Burney as the Guest-in-Chief at the Inaugural Function of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Birth Centenary Celebration held at the Iran Society, Calcutta, on November 26, 1966.

and journals, particularly renowed periodicals of Egypt—*al-Hilal* of George Zaidan, *al-Muqataf* and *al-Manar* of Rashid Rida. Here he came to know about the eminent Egyptian scholar Abduh, a disciple of Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani whom he regarded as the 'greatest man in the last days of Islam'. Although, Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1839-97) had visited Calcutta 10 years before Maulana's birth, yet he left a deep imprint on his mind through his writings and his journal in Arabic *al-Urwat al-Wuthqa* published from Paris in the mid-1880s. Afghani, as you know, founded pan-Islamic movement which influenced two greatest Muslim thinkers of India of this century, namely, Dr. Mohd. Iqbal and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. To continue the story of Maulana's journalistic career in Calcutta. On account of a controversial article on the popular practices associated with the observation of Muharram in Calcutta published in *Ashan-ul-Akhbar*, the Editor had to close it down. In between, he assisted in compilation of the section of Munshi Naubat Rai Nazar's *Khadang-e-Nazar* in Lucknow in March, 1903. He also edited *Edward Gazette* from Shahjahanpur for a short while in this year. In November, 1903 when Maulana was only 15 years old, he started another journal *Lisan-al-Haque* which brought him to the notice of the leading figures in the Urdu literary world. However, only seven/eight issues of the journal were published between November, 1903 and April/May, 1905. Then he moved away to Lucknow where he worked in *Al-Nadwa*, the organ of the Nadwat-ul-Ulema. Lucknow and later to Amritsar in April, 1906 where he was associated with a bi-weekly newspaper 'Vakil'. However, on account of the death of his elder brother Abul Nasr Yasin 'Ah' at the end of 1906, he returned to Calcutta at the request of his father. He did not, however, rest on his oars and from mid-January, 1907 worked in the weekly *Daral-Sultanat*. It continued for about 8-9 months. Then he rejoined 'Vakil' in Amritsar in August/September, 1907 and came back to his father's death bed in August, 1908. He then founded his own famous weekly *Al-Hilal* in July, 1912 which had to be closed down in November, 1914 under the orders of the British Government. However, after a year he started *Al-Balagh* in 1915, which was also closed down in March 1916 when he was externed from Bengal to Ranchi under the Defence of India Act. Later, he started two more journals, a weekly *Paigham* in Urdu in September, 1923 (12-13 issues) and a

fortnightly *Al-Jamia* in Arabic in April, 1923 (which continued till March, 1924) under his supervision but under the editorship of Maulana Abdul Razzque Malihabadi, one of his trusted lieutenants. The latter's son Janab Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi still publishes his Urdu newspapers from Calcutta, *Azad Hind & Ujala.* In June, 1927, Maulana Azad restarted *Al-Hilal* but it died a natural death in December, 1927. This survey will show that almost the entire journalistic career of Maulana Azad was spent in Calcutta.

It was in Calcutta which was then in the throes of an agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 that Maulana Azad established contacts with some of the Hindu revolutionaries of that period. He is said to have joined some of their groups through the mediation of Shyam Sunder Chakravarty, an associate of Aurobindo Ghose. This was his first encounter with political activism and revolutionary movement for the freedom of the country. It will be recalled that it was this brief encounter with the political revolutionaries of Calcutta at this time that later shaped his scheme of forming his own geo-political association Hizbullah and establishing Dar-ul-Irshad for imparting training in political activites.

It is no secret that Maulana Azad was greatly influenced by the people of Bengal, their culture and their language. He is credited with having made a statement broadly to this effect that there are two civilized languages in India : one is Urdu and the other Bengali. Not that Maulana Azad was a linguistic chauvinist. It only demonstrates how deeply he was influenced by the beauty and richness of these two of our finest languages.

There are several other important events in Maulana's personal and political life that took place in Calcutta. These include death of his mother (in 1899), his marriage (1903), death of his elder brother Abul Nasr 'Ah' (1906) and of his father (1908) so far as his personal life is concerned. As for his political activities in Calcutta, a separate paper is needed for listing them out.

In view of all above circumstances, I would suggest for the consideration of the citizens of Calcutta known for their secularism, political activism and catholicity of outlook that a befitting monument should be established in the memory of Maulana Azad in the city. Some of the prestigious institutions—educational,

scientific, cultural—should be named after him. Plaques should be placed on all those houses where he lived and all those buildings where he worked. The street where *Al-Hilal* press was established should be named after it (its present name is Mcleod Street) and re-named as *Al-Hilal* Street. In this context you will be interested to know that in the University town of Heidelberg in West Germany where Iqbal had studied, they have named a road after him. It is called IQBAL Ufer. I have got a photograph of this road that was brought to me by one of my cousins who visited the place recently. This is a common practice in England and other Western countries. The house where Keats died in Rome, is a tourist attraction near the famous Spanish steps.

Recently, a controversy has arisen over publication of 30 pages of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's book *India Wins Freedom* that were withheld earlier for 30 years. I wish to make some observations in this regard. I am of the view that *India Wins Freedom* is not Maulana Azad's book; on the other hand, it is the book of Humayun Kabir containing his impressions of what Maulana Azad may have told him about the transfer of power. It is well-known that Maulana Azad did not speak English, while Humayun Kabir could neither read nor write Urdu. In view of this linguistic gap it is doubtful how Maulana Azad who was known for his chaste and flowery Urdu, could communicate with Kabir. Besides, the Maulana was so metriculous about correct translation of his statements and writings into English that he declined to translate his famous statement in the sedition case which has since been published under the title of *Qaul-i-Faisal*. Again, it was not in keeping with the Maulana's temperament to criticise others or speak ill of them. When Jinnah called him the "Show Boy of the Congress", he did not issue any rejoinder. Such a cultured and sophisticated person could not criticise openly in public or in his writings his old colleagues in the freedom struggle, Nehru and Patel, for the Partition of India. The Maulana was reservd by nature and always avoided talking about himself in laudatory terms. The main theme of *India Wins Freedom* is that if there was anyone who valiantly opposed partition, it was the Maulana. This is totally at variance with his character. Once again, Humayun Kabir's likes and dislikes and his views on politics which were expressed in his book *Muslim Policies* and *Other Essays* published in 1969, are clearly reflected in *India Wins Freedom*. Lastly, Maulana

took meticulous care about his writings to such an extent that as mentioned in the preface to the book, five drafts of the book were presented to the Maulana and corrected by him before the final copy was approved. And strangely enough, none of these drafts corrected or amended or modified by the Maulana is available. It leads one to wonder as to what happened to these drafts. If all of them were not traced out, at least one of them should have been preserved along with 30 pages or amongst his other papers bequethed to the posterity. Considering all these aspects of the question I hold the view that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is not the author of *India Wins Freedom*. It was written by Humayun Kabir on the basis of his conversation with the Maulana and perhaps his impression of whatever talk he had with him on the subject. It is not only my view; it is also shared by some eminent historians and writers on Maulana Azad. I know the perils of raising a serious controversy over this matter in which Humayun Kabir is involved and that too in which remained his field of activities for almost a life time. And yet truth must be stated freely and frankly.

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CALCUTTA'S PART IN THE FORMATION OF ABUL KALAM AZAD**

BARUN DE*

I. A PIONEER OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Maulana Azad's memory has been revivified by the recent twin Centenary observances of 1988-89. Initially he had been treated as a more foil in the media preparation and political stage-managing, of his contemporary Jawaharlal Nehru's image, whose recall to public memory has had very powerful international backing and establishment concern orchestrated from New Delhi. In inverse also, Azad's last published work was turned into an object of contention by factions among his and his amannensis, Prof. Humayun Kabir's literary heirs. The dust has now settled from the trivial controversies about what the Maulana Saheb in his last years in sorrowful intellectual isolation as Minister for Education and Culture in New Delhi thought about his comrades during the last decade before freedom's dawn; and how his last autobiographical amannensis had interpreted the rich complexity of his opinions (surely couched in the Arabic-tinged Urdu of his scholarly diction, which could have been hardly familiar to the Oxonian Anglicism of the Bengali Humayun Kabir). We can

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settle down to a calm and positive evaluation of all that deserves to be commemorated in the work and achievements of one of the most eminent freedom fighters of the Indian nation.

Where the Maulana's intellectual stature is revealed at its most noble is in his formation in an era much earlier than the one in which Nehru or even his father, Motilal Nehru, entered even the local political scene in Allahabad. These are the twenty years before 1923, when he first became President of the Indian National Congress at its Special Session in New Delhi, a full six years before Jawaharlal was installed in the Congress succession, with Mahatma Gandhi's blessing and mediation in the 1929 Lahore session. If that is remembered for its midnight invocation of the new ideal for the 1930s of Purna Swaraj, which ultimately came in 1947 with Lahore, as well as Karachi, Peshawar and Dacca, truncated from India on Muslim communal grounds, the September 1923 Delhi Special Session is equally memorable for Abul Kalam Azad, already one of Asia's finest revolutionary Islamic scholar's categorical repetition of his more-than-decade-old views on Hindu-Muslim unity and his repudiatoin of revivalist ideas of Shuddhi and Sangathan, Tanzim and Tabligh which marked the slippery slide of the Indian masses towards populist communalism.

His invocation in his Presidential Address of 1923 bears recall particularly today when many more partitions—between Ram and Rahim, between backward and forward, between caste and caste, and within religious groups—bid fair to create rifts in contemporary Indian democracy :

> "If today an angel descending from the clouds were to declare from the top of the Qutb Minar in Delhi : "Discard Hindu-Muslim unity and within twenty-four hours *Swaraj* is yours. I would prefer to sacrifice *Swaraj* rather than Hindu-Muslim unity. For delay in the attainment of *swaraj* will be a loss to India alone, but if our unity disappears it will be a loss to the whole world of humanity." (Aligarh, Jamia Millia Press, 1923, pp. 23-25).

If twenty-five years later, Azad like a disciplined veteran followed his party in taking *swaraj* at the cost of communal solidarity on the pan-South Asian plane, he was to spend the rest

of his life regretting it. There is enough in even the expurgated version of *India Wins Freedom* of the 1959 edition (let alone the trivial additions of 1989) to prove that he had the capacity to admit what his contemporaries in the Congress establishment were too cautions to—that their tragic choice to partition India as the price of truncated *swaraj* had been a mistake. It is this awarences which makes Abul Kalam Azad not just the great Education and Culture Minister that he indubitably was, but someone standing out from the political establishment of which he was indubitably a part.

II. OUTSIDE THE DELHI ESTABLISHMENT CONTEXT

This capacity to stand apart, even in anguish, of one of the pre-eminent national leaders who strode the Delhi scene like colossi after 1947, can indeed be traced back to his inner awareness of the rectitude—if not the extreme categorical imperative—of preference "to sacrifice *swaraj* rather than Hindu-Muslim unity." This preference does not become central in Indian politics till the 1930s. Hindu-Muslim friction itself became a mass issue only in the 1920s when Hindu and Muslim populist espousal of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan's "two-nation theory," the expansion into mass organisations of primordial aggressive militancy by Arya Samaj, and more militant Hindu regional organisations, as well as the Majlis Ittehad-ul Muslimeen or Jamiat-i-Islam's or the Muslim League, or even the Akali Party politics in the Punjab, broke the husk of the old Urdu *rais* culture in the Indo-Gangetic Plains and the Deccan.

Explicit anti-communalist movements confronting British imperialist strategems of 'divide-and-rule' become very important on the all-India plane mainly in the 1930s when groups around Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress Socialists took it up, grappling with it at the level of mass consciousness in the 1937 Provincial and Central Legislative elections. Out of these struggles, the Pakistan demand was to be opportunistically taken up by the All-India Muslim League. But it was during the previsage of such attempts, in the first mass contact movement against communal disharmony. Gandhiji's imaginative attempt to bind to the national cause, the pan-Islamic sympathies of grassroot religious Muslims, such as small town and rural *ulema*, and their followers

even more than the citybred elites, that Azad became known. The Khilafat Movement is primarily associated in text books with the Ali Brothers, who later reneged from all-India nationalism. But it was famous for many other nationalist leaders like Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan of the Frontier. Mazharul Haq of Sadaqat Ashram in Patna, or the 'journalist Mujibur Rahman' who courted imprisonment in Calcutta at the same time as more well known leaders of Non-co-operation and Khilafat such as Chittaranjan Das, Maulana Azad, the young Subhas Chandra Bose, and many others from the Indus Valley to Malabar. The Intellectual origins of Azad's own finely nuanced position of national secularism, and also those of other leaders mentioned above have to be seen in the clear light of their *own* ideas, as well as the social, intellectual, political and cultural *milieu* of their time and location. The first task, of summing up on Azad's intellectual evolution has been performed with considerable perception and historical scholarship in Gali Minault and Christian Troll's edition of the late Dr. Ian Henderson Douglas' posthumous book. *Abul Kalam Azad, An Intellectual and Religious Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1988), which focuses on the pre-Independence and indeed pre-1923 Congress vanguard period of the making of the Maulana.

But while Azad's ideas have been traced from the point of view of religion, mystic free thought, and naturalistic rationalism (what Jamal-ad Din-al-Afghani, in the late 19th century had satirised as the *nechariya* outlook, forsaking all but pietistic culture : see Nikki R. Keddic, an *Islamic Response to Imperialism : Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al Din al-Afghani,* University of California, 1968), Douglas, Minault and Troll's book remains—as is to be expected from an Orientalist practitioner, of divinity, appreciative of merely Eastern religious piety, theological at best mystic. Feelings of the unity of religions, of humanity, of *wahdat-al-din,* of *tauhid* do certainly play their civilising part in the evolution of national secularism. This is apparent if we study the *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin* of Rammohun Roy, or the seventeeth century *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* of *Muhsin Fani,* or at the level of attempts by the state to impress social uniformity, in the *Din-Ilahi* of the Emperor Akbar. Yet other, and more exactly secular influences also mould even religious secularists. The initial set of such influences which influenced Azad's secularism

are represented by the metropolitan traditions which loomed largest in his consciousness. As a pointer to this, our attention may be drawn to the place in the origin of Abul Kalam Azad's secular ideology of our city of Calcutta in the first few years of this century, even before the Swadeshi movement radically transformed its pre-eminent place in the British Empire.

III. AN EXAMPLE—IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHIFT FROM MECCA TO CALCUTTA

Muhiuddin Ahmed, as he was called in his family, was born in 1888 in Mecca, of an Indian migrant father, and the Arab daughter of a local notable of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. His Shaikhzada partimonial lineage intermarried with a more recent, (i.e., second half of the eighteenth century interloping—under the Durrani temporary conquest of the Indus Valley) Afghan migrant connections. He was inordinately proud of his polyglot and alien elite ancestry, which mingled a diversity of petty noble heritage. This encompassed the scholarship and statecraft of old Delhi, the military prowess of Heratis, and the public administration of Mecca. He was so proud that every time he wrote or dictated his own memories—in the *Tazkira*. in the *Azad ki Kahani Khud Azad ki Zabani*, and in, *India Wins Freedom*—it took so much time to untwill the pennants of his lineage, that much of his early life and middle age from the First War till the end of the Second, as well as his old age after 1947 remained untold. It has to be inferred from his moral and political philosophy.

But what was more important than the Mughal subaltern lineage was Khairuddin Ahmed, his father's shift as a young boy first to the Ottoman and alternative subaltern Arabic tradition of Mecca, and then his return in 1898, not to the devastated old imperial capital, but to Calcutta, the still vital colonial hub of British imperialism in Asia and Australasia (and not just of North India or even the Mughal Empire). Delhi's connection with the Azad heritage was largely hind sight though its place in his heritage need not be downplayed. Maulvi Khairuddin had been invited as "a Sufi *pir* of the Qadiri and Naqshbandi orders whose disciples included a number of wealthy merchants of the Surati Nakhuda community in Calcutta, Bombay and elsewhere. These benefactors persuaded Khairuddin to return to Calcutta from the

Hejaz and then to remain there with his family following his wife's death" (Minault and Troll, Introduction to *Azad : An Intellectual and Religious Biography*, p. 2). This took place at a time when Calcutta was gripped by a frenzy of Hindu-Muslim mass rioting, the Tallah riots the first of many to come in the next half century. This was a period of intellectual ferment in the city, and then of the great Swadeshi movement, reacting against Lord Curzon's Bengal Partition and Lord Minto's repression of the protests against it. The historical details can be reconstructed from Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 1903-08 (New Delhi, 1972) and Dipesh Chakravarti, "Communal Riots and Labour : Bengal's Jute Mill Hands in the 1890s" (*Past and Present*, No. 91, May, 1981).

The South Calcutta—a house on Ballygunge Circular Road, with a small mosque on the edge of Chakraberia Road, opposite the Governor's Bodyguard's Maidan (not yet till 1942-43 a cantonment) in Ballygunge—to which shifted the Ahmed family—Khairuddin, his Arab wife who would have no Urdu spoken in her quarters, but who died in 1899, his two elder daughters, his elder son and the younger one, the precocious Muhiuddin, and the youngest daughter. Abru Begum—was one from which "The Illusion of Permanence" had not yet passed. In North Calcutta was the Indian native, on one of whose streets, Chitpur Road, was both Jorasanko, the Tagore family home then at the height of its cultural glory with Rabindranath effulgent, and south of it later the Nakhuda Masjid to become the principal congregational place of worship for Muslim devotions in the first half of the 20th century. One of its founding patrons, after whom the side street its gates face, Zakariah Street, is named, was a shipper and merchant with Bombay and Mecca contacts, Haji Noor Mohamed Zakaria whom Dipesh Chakravarty in the 1970s in a striking *Past and Present* article, unravelled as a *capo* behind a *mafia*—like structure of clientage among Muslim jute-mill hands in the northern suburbs, migrants from the United Provinces and Bihar with no cultural roots in Bengal, who had been participants in the Tallah riots. Such men were pir Khairuddin's *murids* setting him up in a middle-class and semi-westernised locality in South Calcutta, far from the congestion of Chitpur.

This locality was neither particularly Hindu, nor Muslim. Chakraberia and Padmapukur behind it had homes of rising

gentry pushing up the professional world of law, medicine, petty government service, and even entrepreneurial activity in cycle-manufacture or consumer goods. They turned to the Swadeshi movement for ideological ballast even before Curzon's Bengal Partition in 1905 : led by people who lived in the vicinity of Ballygunge Circular Road and Lansdowne Road like Asutosh Chowdhury, Surendranath Tagore, Sarala Devi Ghoshal (later Dutt Chaudhurani), Barrister Pramatha Mitter. The common friend of these people Okakura Kakuzo was propagating all over the Pacific islands, the awakening of Asia against European domination and exploitation. To anyone young and socially conscious, such a milieu was an antidote against blind fundamentalism or superstitious personal devotion.

The precocious little Muhiuddin, motherless at 12 but surely coddled by his sisters and family, experienced a social strait jacket in his family milieu. Douglas gives a percipient and sympathetic psycho-analysis of what Erik Erikson would have called the identity crisis of Azad. Our point has been, however, that this residence and new roots in the liberating expansiveness and verdance of the open political culture of South Calcutta in the golden age of Ballygunge—in itself different from the Muslim petty professional communities in the narrow lanes around Karaya, or Wellesley Street, or Chitpur Road, and certainly far removed from the decadent *haveli-kotha* cultures of the exiled Mysore or Awadh princely families in Garden Reach and Tollygunge past Alipur far in the southern suburbs—were a factor, one among others of course—which gave him, his opinions the freshness and freedom that gave him courage to resolve his crisis.

In Mecca at the request of its orthodox establishment, Khairuddin Ahmed had written in defence of the doctrines of *taqlid* "to accept without question the authority of early Muslim jurists in matters of Muslim laws; to follow authority without reflection" on principles in question. Indian disciples of the eighteenth century *alim*, Shaikh Waliullah Dehlawi had challenged dogmas on rational principles and Khairuddin bitterly condemned what he considered were Waliullahi "Schismatics." In Calcutta, he remained a preacher of outstanding ability, "once drawing a crowd of twenty or thirty thousand on the Calcutta Maidan and devoting a whole year to a series of weekly sermons on one verse from Sura Yusuf, affecting his audience to such an extent that

their lamentations seemed like Muharram mourning and attracted the attention of passers by (Douglas, *op. cit.*, 313, 34). A man generally lacking in personal prejudice—except against presumed sahismatics—of great generosity, sophistication, personal piety, and a believer of the precept "Proud before the rich, humble before the poor : this is true etiquette", Khairuddin appears to have been a *rais* among the *ulama*, and an *alim* for all *rais.* Chaste Urdu was spoken among the menfolk, though with his mother and elder sisters, Muhiuddin conversed in Arabic in Mecca dialect. "Even in the family the children always addressed (their father) as *hazrat* ('your honour') as they heard his disciples do". Many of these attributes, in a more democratic veneer, were part of the younger Azad's character. In the first decade of the twentieth century, at a time when the *bhadralok—ashraf* elements in the city were becoming confused as they saw their subordinate alternate—under-officer leadership in British India challenged by an arrogant Oxonian Viceroy's attacks on the Bengali *babu* subelites, such attributes were practised, without theological feudal trappings, by a middle-class leadership clustered around the affluent Bengal literati-elite, such as the Tagores, the Chowdhuries, Nilratan Sarkar and his kin, the Rays (a prolific Swadeshi-initiating lineage, the most notable being Upendrakishore and his son, Sukumar, Satyajit's father), Surrendranath Banerjee, Romesh Chunder Dutt or Beharilal Gupta (all three in the second batch of Indians to join the "heaven born ICS" in the 1860s).

It was this lack of theology and yet depth of scholarly piety, which formed the grist for Muhiuddin's identity crisis. His father was so anti-reformist that he would not even admit his son to the Calcutta Madrasa, where theology was taught under British state auspices. Or—who knows—this may have been an old fashioned *hijrati*'s (who had been taken from Delhi to Mecca at the time of the 1857 uprising) way of registering his principles of not accepting imperial control of theology. The *ulama* of the second half of the nineteenth century, after the Sepoy Revolt of 1857 may have been feudal : but they were often also personally anti-imperialist. Calcutta to them was a cosmopolitan centre, not just a city for subaltern collaboration. Yet their alternative in education was no better than the fruit of Macaulay's poison tree.

Trained at home in the *Dars-e-Nizami*, an eighteenth century pedagogic syllabus, which practised at Al-Azhar in Cairo had led

the great Muhammad Abduh to give the seminary up in disgust, and which Azad would later call "worthless—worthless (*naqis*), the infant Muhiuddin became accomplished in rote memory of *hadith, tafsir* and *fiqh*, i.e., the sayings of the pious, theological jurisprudencc, and exegesis. It was only later that he taught himself to develop 'mental initiative' and to integrate one branch of knowledge to another. That he did so was due in his case, to his openness to the metropolitan publishing environment with its multiple choices in the excellent bookshops and discussion circles of old Calcutta, the location of a college affiliation network (which is what Calcutta University amounted to on the London University model) that still extended from Lahore to Rangoon to the northern borders of Hyderabad. If Muhiuddin came in maturity to be "less and less the type of Muslim represented by his father, but never completely lost the characteristics of his orthodox upbringing" (Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 44), then the importance in his young manhood should not be forgotten of a new city—whose democratic novelty meant less to Khairuddin, already a middle-aged *pir* surrounded by adulators.

Still in the nineteenth century at the age of eleven (Jawaharlal Nehru was still a child at home in Allahabad) under the *takhallus* (penname) of Azad, came out the first issue of *Naurang-e-Alam* to which only 150 out of an expected 1000 subscribed. This taste for Urdu journalism, with its secular and Persian inflection, at a tender age, was suggested by Maulvi Abdul Wahid Khan, who prompted the *takhallus*, because in anthologies, it was by them that poems were listed, "and those beginning with *alif* would be first" (*ibid.*, p. 45). Undaunted at the age of twelve in the first year of the 20th century, he brought out 12 issues of a weekly newspaper, *Misbah* with "sections devoted to theological, historical and biographical topics, articles on such subjects as *iman* (faith), al-Ghazali, Newton and the law of Gravity and one on the Id festival, which he says were reprinted by other Urdu papers" (*ibid.*, p. 46). That these were childish effusions is indubitable. But their rationalist bent, their inherent reformism is also to be surmised. And they gave the boy prodigy a public image.

He and his brother sent poetry as well as prose contributions to *Khudang-e-Nazar* of Lucknow. Its editor agreed to an increased prose section if Azad took the responsibility of editing it. It was on the basis of an article on X-rays that Azad wrote for the paper

that Shibli began to correspond with the young writer" (*ibid*). He wrote for Shaikh Abdul Qadir's paper *Makhzan* (in which Allama Muhammad Iqbal was also contributing) and for *Tuhfa-i-Ahmadiya* and *Ahsan-ul-Akhbar* both published from Calcutta by Maulvi Ahmed Husain Fatehpuri, who had a reputation for controversy with Christianity. He worked in the Calcutta office of these papers, finding there the new secular thought of the Egyptian renaissance in Cairo periodicals such as *al-Hilal*, *al-Muqtataf*, and Rashid Rida's famous *al Manar*, in which he read Muhammad Abduh's famous tract on modernising, yet traditionalist principles of the 'advanced Europeanising' thought of Ferah Antwn, expressed in Abduh's *Islam and Christianity*. Azad's concern for the new Arabic liberal social theories also attracted him to the annual meetings of Nadwat-ul-Ulema and to polemicise against anti-Nadwa tracts. But the usual factions in such academic congresses disgusted his fastidious taste, and increased his revulsion against organized ulama orthodoxy.

In these first heady years, before the Anti-Partition movements swamped out early intellectual trends, when Swadeshi was maturing in the minds and efforts of the Calcutta elite, Azad was a free intellectual *par excellence*. He was seized with the desire "to hold forth" to speak out, to "set up a society complete with weekly meetings and a reading room" (*ibid*., p. 48) to receive the respect due to the heir (along with his elder brother) of a powerful *pir*, with rich sponsors backing his publicist whims. In his later memories, published in Urdu, he expresses cultivated disgust for these vanities. But at the same time they were formative forces in his character. They have to be studied in the specific ideological context of Calcutta, just before 1905. It was perhaps about part of such a precocious adoles that he reminisced later, rather too dismissive about (to use one of Lenin's terms about Lenin's own past) "the heritage we renounced—"

> "Suddenly, when I was at most thirteen years old, my heart became disgusted with my present circumstances and what I saw around me . . . The unrest increased until I was ashamed by, and despised the things that in other people's eyes were so honourable and estimable. Now, when people kissed my hands and feet, I felt as if some great evil were taking place. A few days before, the very same spectacle had been for me

the source of the greatest pride and self-satisfaction."

The sight of a cousin from Mecca visiting Calcutta who "revelled in it and actually encouraged it" (*ibid*., p. 50) worried his own feelings of earlier acquiescence. He began to stop people from such practices, and think deeply about the lack of rectitude or fidelity to the Prophat's own caution against such practices. Only his youngest sister Abru Begum sympathised with him. Azad's revolt against his own milieu (which he later identified with his *takhallus*, though the *takhallus* actually preceded it and may have been a self-fulfilling prophecy) had begun by 1901. He was no longer to consciously be in the strict *pir-murid* tradition in its degraded form. The intellectual shift from Mecca to Calcutta was complete. It happened to synchronise with the beginnings of the 20th century. It was a shift from anti-Waliullahi *taqlid* and feudalist superstition to a love for rationalism, science and individualist faith in man, as well as in categorical imperatives. It was not a breakdown of personal religion; but rather a refashioning, a reorganisation, with much turmoil and emotional disturbance, no doubt in future, with loneliness bred from the fact that Azad in later life was too politically fastidious too much dependant on the reason of the head, rather than the wiles of the heart to be able to gain a large following of secular people. He would only remain a standard of integrity, not a man from the grassroots with a firm base. Withal he remains a solid example of the best that was to grow in Indian nationalism during the present century.

IV. A PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

The rest of the story is quite well known from the Urdu text of Malik Ram's edition of Azad's own *Tazkira* and other 'autobiographies' : first Malihabadi's *Azad ki Kahani* as well as Kabir's editions of *India Wins Freedom* (1959 and 1989). Ian Henderson Douglas superbly marshalled the data on Azad's personal feelings, ideological maturing, and political transformatian. His editors, Minault and Troll have appended an even more useful bibliographical note on ancillary biographical work on Azad, as well as on the political culture and intellectual history of central trends in Indian Islam in the twentieth century as it has been written in

Urdu as well as English. In addition, there is a curious article mirroring the secret Intelligence Branch reports of the British Imperial Police in Calcutta in the years before Azad's arrest and internment during the First World War, collated by Rajat Kanta Roy of Presidency College, Calcutta ("Revolutionaries, Pan-Islamists and Bolsheviks : Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Political Underworld in Calcutta, 1905-25" in Mushirul Hasan, ed. *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India,* 2nd rev. edn., New Delhi, Manohar, 1985, pp. 101-24). This adds some data on information which is also available from Azad's own testimony, Douglas' painstaking reconstruction of his early twentieth century contacts, and the legends of revolutionary nationalism from 1905 to the Khilafat Agitation.

This is not the place to examine the entire data from a non-religious point of view to make the point that the socio-economic and political cultural milieu of the city in which Azad lived, when he was not interned, or in prison, as he would be three times—all influenced him deeply in ways that Harrow, Cambridge and Allahabad influenced Jawaharlal Nehru in the first half of the twentieth century; Kaira, Ahmedabad and a brief stint preparing for the Bar in London influenced Vallabhbhai Patel; or Ziradei, Presidency College, Calcutta, and Patna influenced Dr. Rajendra Prasad in the same period. But the point is indeed not often made.

Even the excellent edition of Ian Henderson Douglas' account treats Azad only as a Dehlawi *manqué.* It does fail to highlight his political contacts with Hindu revolutionary terrorism in Calcutta with the same care for the 1905-11 period, that it devotes to influences on him from West Asian political thought at the same time. Of course, his visit there, or the influence of *al-Manar,* Rida and Abduh, Al-Azhar or the pregenitors of ideas later theologically perverted (into Hassan al-Banna's post-1935 Muslim Brotherhood and later versions of Islamic 'fundamentalism') were influential in Azad's early ideology. But careful sifting of his own texts will show that the Indian circumstances were also there. These were the response to Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's rationalism and also to the indigenous patriotism of Shibli Numani and contacts with Maulana Salaiman Nadwi, the appeal to the use of force in Bengal after 1905 and ultimately the appeal of Gandhi and his development of the pacifist and humanitarian ideas first

put forward in *Hind Swaraj*, at the time when Azad was planning his campaign to organize Hizbollah from Calcutta.

On the other hand, neither the recent biography nor earlier writings have fully analysed the obverse of this medal either. Why did the revolutionary Maulana lack a stable base in his home city and the Bengal milieu ? Like many revolutionary militant patriots, whether Pulin Das or Bhupendranath Datta, Swami Prajnananda or Troilokya Maharaj, Jatindranath Mukherjee, Narendranath Bhattacharya or Surya Sen, Abul Kalam Azad had great charisma in his youth but no solid political following, later or "vote bank" like those which Surrendranath Banerjee, Chittaranjan Das, or Subhas Chandra Bose gained from the Bengal *bhadralok* and the nationalist masses; or A.K. Fazlul Huq, Sir Khwaja Nazimuddin, or Husain Shahid Suhrawardy wheedled out of various Muslim segments of the masses, feudal elements or local bourgeoisie in the 1935-47 period. It is necessary to emphasise how men of lesser intellect than the nationalist Azad, but men with definitely less elitist roots among the petty traders and peasants of the countryside, (with the capacity to mobilise *sajjadanashin pirs* or rural *ulama*, far less sophisticated than the Meccan divinity traditions against which Muhiuddin Ahmed had declared his Azadi in 1901 or 1902) could away sizable fractions of the Bengal vote particularly in the years *after* Azad's anti-communal speech of Delhi in 1923. It was the thought of such men for whom Azad had no sympathy at all that actually moulded the second Partition of Bengal, in which imperialism and communalism finally came together to divide the land in 1947.

Perhaps this is where Azad's real tragedy lay, not merely in the fact of the partition of India in 1946-47 which he stressed in the evening of his life when talking about the text of *India Wins Freedom* to a Humayun Kabir, avid for his views from hindsight on the role of Gandhi, Nehru and Patel in accepting partition in 1947, views which were moulded by Azad's own stultifying sense of powerlessness, though he had been Congress President till 1946, and perhaps all the more poignant because he did not have it in him to reject the cabinet position in Delhi. His tragedy lay in his ambivalent relationship with Calcutta, the city where he became 'Azad' : the city of cosmopolitan enlightenment and rationalism, where the latest papers from the fountainheads of Islamic modernism, Egypt, Aligarh and Lahore could be subscribed to or published

in : the city where revolutionary sentiment suffused its youth of the first half of the century with sentiments which generally outran the practicalities of Indian politics as they emerged under bourgeois nationalism. This was a city which after 1911 slowly receded from power to memories of intellectual domination; in whieh the broad values of pan-Islam that Sayyid Jamal-ad-din Afghani, or the Persian publicist Malkom Khan had preached in the Albert Hall or in the press of the city in the late nineteenth century, had given way to an actual Hindu-Muslim division by the time that Chittaranjan Das, the one of last great proponents of a working adjustment between religious communities had died in Darjeeling in 1925; the city in which the Indian National Congress was to be riven by factions out to control patronage for government jobs without any improvement of the conditions of the *chotolok atraf* or *razil qaum* (*mean penple*; 'others', or 'people of the dust') who laboured with their hands for maintaining the privileges of the power elite. This was the city in which Azad had been bred practically half-a-century before he came back to it after his third release from incarceration in 1945. His wife had died and been buried in the city while he had languished in Ahmadnagar Fort, honourably refusing parole to come and see her briefly as she sank, unless he was actually released. His infant son had died there much earlier. The city's Congress politics were narrow, limited, and lacking in imagination or mass appeal. He was called to New Delhi to take up high position acting within the new apparatuses of central federal authority over Indian culture and education. And when the city erupted in what the press called the Great Killings of 1946, which tolled the doom of the Partition, Azad was left puzzled, tormented, answerless about the dark forces which had emerged out of the crannies and fissures of the Indian body politics that his enlightened reason had failed to visualise. Merely elite rationality is not enough to comprehend or combat communalism. One has to work within, as well as lead the masses, to do that.

This paper has been an appeal and not a scholarly essay in itself. To sum up. Great patriots like Azad have to be studied in their full social milieu and not just in terms of merely their intellect or even symbolic standards of faith. The studies have to be specific, located in milieus, constructed in actual complexities, as far as possible. In Azad's case the milieu was that of metropolitan

elite. It is this socially contradictory role of a political outsider whose comprehension, outside the stultifying centralism of New Delhi, can help us to classify many of the gaps in Azad's biography, which his remarkable intellectual consistency to secularism, science and communal harmony do not necessarily illuminate. Such a study requires the welding of certain facilities and skills that were common in the turn-of-the last-century Calcutta that so vivified the revolutionary Maulana.

The first of them is a vital and open academic environment for accepting communal fraternity. This, in a national crisis of communal harmony, is what has not been totally eroded or devalued in West Bengal, and an issue that Calcutta can boast of having struggled for. The second is receptivity to ideas from all parts of the world. Unfortunately, the intellectual awareness of progressive forces in Asia and the rest of the South in global terms is less today than of English language information about developments in Europe or among the Northern superpowers : the linguistic equipment to abstract or to interact with forces in the modern Arabic and Persian language literature is much less today than it was when Cairo journals were avidly read in Calculta in 1901, and even before that Malkom Khan brought out a Persian journal calling for reform in the Qajar system of government. We still have a Department of Islamic History and Culture in Calcutta University as well as Department of Arabic and Persian. And of course the Calcutta Madrasa still exists. Can we not expect some initiative from their Professors in this essential activity of reviving knowledge of the languages which give access to the ideas of West Asia ? At least a good translation in English or even Bengali of the biographical source material on Azad would be an activity as worthy as study of material in French or Dutch archives on late mediaeval European maritime trade. What we need is a good library—on the lines of the Nehru Memorial Museum and library, New Delhi, or even the recent Indian Council of Historical Research in New Delhi's Documentation Centre, magnificently endowed like them, to provide access to scholars to the latest literature and journals on at least West Asia, if not the whole of the continent within which India is, but of which it knows less today than it did in the era of Azad and Gandhi. Can the Iran Society not take the initiative to prevail on the Governments of

West Bengal and of India itself to provide grants to undertake the acquiring of the house where Azad lived as a nucleus for building on it a library Centre for such an endeavour, worthy of his stature and memory ?

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GLIMPSES OF AZAD'S PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK IN HIS GHOBAR--E-KHATIR**

M. FIROZE*

Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), who will always be remembered in the history of India for the role he played in the freedom struggle of the country, was basically a scholar of incomparable depth and calibre. He had established the supremacy of his pen at a very early age, particularly between 1912 and 1916, during which he brought out an Urdu weekly *al-Helal*, followed by *al-Balagh*, both under his editorship, and contributed in them, from time to time, a number of essays and articles, not only on political, but also on social, religious, educational, historical and literary subjects in such an impressing and imposing style that it created a stir in the academic circle of the period. The fame of Azad as a scholar, however, rests, to a great extent, on the three principal works in Urdu, the *Tazkira*,[1] a biography of his ancestors, written in 1919; the *Tarjuman-ul Qur'an*[2] a commentary of the first eighteen chapters of the Holy Qur'an, finished in 1930; and the *Ghobar-e-Khatir*,[3] a collection of his non-political letters, compiled in the form of a book, in 1946. These works of Azad are important not only for their historical, exegetic and literary values respectively, but also for the study of his philosophical

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outlook in them. But before we undertake such a study, it seems desirable to look into the background of his mind.

Born in a family, which was proud of its having maintained a long and impeccable record of piety and asceticism. Azad was brought up under a strictly religious discipline by his father. Maulana Khairuddin, himself a celebrated sufi of his time, but inspite of that. Azad was, from his very childhood, more interested in philosophical than in theological matters. "Philosophy", he himself says, "has been the main subject of my interest since my student-life and this interest progressed with the age."[4] While still a boy. Azad used to study with great fervour the religio-philosophical writings of his contemporary reformer and educationist, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), who was well known for his rationalistic ideas. Under the influence of Sir Sayyid's ideas. Azad, as he himself says, was convinced that "only those religious beliefs, which are in accordance with human reasoning and material knowledge, are true.'[5] His fascination for Sir Sayyid, however, ended soon, and he began to question the validity of religion itself. Such an approach to religion, he admits, had in his early years, shaken the very foundation of his belief, which he, however, later on regained through intuition that gave new meanings to his experiences.[6] This final phase in the evolution of his thought is more marked in his *Ghobar-e-Khatir*, because it is the last in the series of works published by him. Ian Handerson Douglas rightly remarks : "If the *Tarjuman* reflects Azad's development beyond mentality of *al-Hilal* and *Tajkira*, then *Ghobar-e-Khatir* represents a further maturation."[7]

The *Ghobar-e-Khatir* is a collection of twenty-four letters[8] written by Azed from time to time between 1942 and 1945, when he was in jail as a political prisoner, and addressed to his friend Habibur Rahman Khan Shervani. But these letters are actually short essays of miscellaneous nature, recording the author's experiences and observations, because Azad had adopted the practice of penning down his thoughts and feelings on bits of papers as a way as if he was conveying them to some one, and preserving these notes in a file just to keep himself engaged in something worthy in the solitude of cell : otherwise he knew it will that, owing to the restrictions imposed by the jail authorities on his correspondance, these fetters would never reach the addressee.[9] After his release from the jail these letters were

compiled in a book-form and published with his permission in 1946. In almost each of these letters, Azad selects a certain topic and discusses it thoroughly in a style which was exclusively his own. The book, as a whole throws ample light not only on the various aspects of his character and personality but also on his philosophical outlook, with which we are concerned here. From this point of view, four letters are very important and I would like to analyse them here.

One latter,[10] dated August 11, 1942, contains Azad's views about life. He is of the opinion that the perception of the realities of human life is beyond the scope of both philosophy and science, and that it can be acquired only through religion, the term being used, it is to be noted, in a general sense. Azad says, "Philosophy cannot help us endure the bitter experiences of practical life. It, no doubt, creates some sort of stoical indifference in human nature and we begin to look upon the calamities and sufferings of life from a plane, a little higher than ordinary one, but it cannot solve the natural problems of life. It certainly gives us some sort of solace, but this solace is absolutely negative; positive consolation is always lacking in it. It will assuage the grief of 'loss' but it will not offer any hope of 'achievement'. Science, too, according to Azad, fails in providing any solace to mankind, "It will extinguish all the existing lamps of hope and belief, but it will not enkindle any new lamp." "Then what is the thing that can keep us up in the difficulties of life ?" he asks, and replies that it is religion alone that can do so. He argues that however rationalist a man may be, he will find mental peace nowhere but in religion, and says that "the solace offered by religion is not only negative but also positive, because religion convinces of the moral values of human deeds, and this conviction cannot be obtained from anywhere else. It tells us that life is a duty that ought to be performed; it is a burden that ought to be borne."

Stressing the importance of belief, Azad says : "Philosophy will open the door of scepticism and will not shut it again. Science will give us the proof but not the brief, which religion gives us the belief though not the proof. And here in order to live we need not only the established facts but also the belief. We cannot be content with only those things which we accept because we can prove them; we desire those things too which we are bound to accept, though we cannot prove them", and he concludes his

remark by quoting the following line from Tennyson :

By faith and faith alone embrace
Believing where we cannot prove.

Azad then discusses the concept of pleasure in life. He says that the pain borne by a man in the struggle to reach the object of life is a pleasure to him, and since the object of life differs from one person to another, the nature of pleasure also varies accordingly. "One and the same principle," says he, "cannot be applied to gauge the feelings of everybody. The yard-stick we use in measuring the standard of the feelings of pleasure and displeasure in a rustic cannot be used in case of a master of fine arts. The pleasure a mathematician feels in solving a problem is quite different from what a profligate feels in debauchery. Often it so happens that we roll over the bed of roses and feel no comfort, while on other occasions we walk over the thorns and derive a strange pleasure in their every prick."

Life, says Azad, cannot be lived without having an object in view to achieve, but this object, he adds, varies according to one's temperament. He says that one person may be satisfied by achieving what he had intended to achieve in life, while the other may not. "Those who are not satisfied are also of different grade. Most of them have such goals in view as to keep them ever in action, while a few are also of such a temperament that they desire not only the action but also the emotion of life." Azad pleads for a constant change in life. He says, "The reality of our existence is nothing but a constant movement and emotion. What we call rest may be described as death. The wave is there so long as it moves, but the moment it steps moving, it ceases to exist." He then quotes the following couplet from Kalim Kashani :

Mowjim ke asudgiye ma 'adam-e-ma-st
Ma zendeh az anim ke aram na-girim

saying that the Persian poet "has summarised the whole philosophy of life in the above verse.

Azad's views about life find further expression in his another letter,[11] dated August 27, 1942. In this letter the author dwells upon the theme : how to live, He says, "The most important

work in life is to live, that is, to pass the life happily." Quoting an old Chinese maxim that the wisest man on earth is one who is always cheerful, Azad advises us to keep ourselves always happy. He says, "If you have learnt the art of keeping yourself happy here in all circumstances, then, believe me, you have learnt the greatest thing in life, and after that it needs not be asked what else you have learnt. Keep yourself happy and go on asking others to avoid wearing a mournful look."

Agreeing with the observation of a French literateur Andre Gide, that to keep oneself cheerful is not only a natural necessity but also a moral responsibility. Azad elaborates : "The impact of the mood of our pensonal life is not only confined to ourselves, but it extends to others, or you may say, the manner we live affects others too; and as such it is our moral duty not to make others sad by being ourselves sad." Explaining it further he says, "Our life is like a hall of mirrors. If a wrinkle appears on one forehead, the same will happen to hundreds of other foreheads. The life of each of us is not an individual event; it is rather a part of the whole. A single wave appears on the surface of the river, but the same wave produces innumerable ripples. Here nothing is our own. Whatever we do for ourselves, is shared by others too. No happiness will be able to cheer us up, if we are surrounded by mournful faces. We make others happy by being ourselves happy and feel elated to see others glad."

Azad, however, wonders that though religion, philosophy and ethics tried to solve the problem of life, yet in each of them there developed a bias against life. He rejects the popular notion that man can never be of a religious, philosophical or ethical type unless he pulls a long face and appears morose and depressed.

In his letter,[12] dated October, 17, 1942, Azad takes up the complicated issue concerning the existence of God, and emphasises that the solution of this issue is related to that of the mysteries of universe. He say, "We are bound to admit the existence of God for the sole reason that if we do not do so, the mysteries of the universe will remain unsolved, whereas the desire to solve them keeps us restless." What is this life and this world and why ? Has it any origin or not ? Will it cease to axist at any point of time or not ? What is the reality of man himself ? What is this thought and intellect ? In there any thing or not behind this veil of perplexity and bewilderment ? Such questions, says Azad,

have vexed the mind of man since the time when he used to live in caves till this day when he has gone far ahead in scientific discoveries; but they have still remained unanswered, because "the more we try to solve them, the more complicated they grow. Even before a single question is answered, ten more questions arise; even before a single secret is unravelled, hundreds of new secrets emerge." The problem, according to Azad, is that we try to solve them with the help of our wisdom and reasoning, which ultimately lead us to nowhere. But, he say, the moment we add this much to our knowledge that an Omniscient and Omnipotent Being exists behind the veil of mysteries, the entire situation is suddenly changed and it appears as if we have emerged from darkness into light. Every question is answered; every thirst has been quenched. The whole complication was like a lock that opened at once with the click of this key."

Azad then discusses the issue of the existence of God from another point of view. He says that man, after passing through various stages, has reached this lofty position which distinguishes him from all the other creatures of the earth, but even then the desire to go on rising is always burning his inner self and for his endless progress he wants to keep in front of him such a superior object as may inspire him to soar higher and higher to reach it. Now what can be that superior object ? asks Azad, and replies that it cannot be anything other than the existence of God.

Belief in the existence of God, says Azad, is the answer to a man's natural search; because for every natural search there must be a natural answer, inherent in human nature. For example, he says, a child needs some living pattern for the growth of its natural faculties and even for learning how to talk; and these patterns are provided to it by nature in the form of its parents. Similarly, he argues, when human mind, after reaching such a stage where it surpasses all the patterns around it, wants to continue its progress, it must be regarded as man's natural desire and if it is a natural desire, it certainly has a natural response to it inherent in his ownself. The response, concludes Azad, appears in no other form but in the existence of God.

The discussion on the above issue is continued by Azad in his next letter,[13] dated October 13, 1942, but he begins the letter with a different, though related, subject : the nature of the human conception of God. He asks why man could not remain content

with the ideas of God being without 'personal' traits. He replies that it is due to the same fact that human nature, which requires an object to inspire it to rise higher than what it is, cannot be satisfied unless the object appears to it in a personified form. Since the abstract conception of God, says Azad, is something beyond the grasp of human minds which wants to visualize it in some or other form, it became imperative to attribute some personal trait to that absolute existence; and in support of his arguments, he cites examples from the Hindu religion and Islam. Azad then reverts to the issue of the existence of God. Discussing the theory of evolution, he points out that life in the universe and the universe itself have come to the present stage after passing through innumerable stages and this systematic and symmetric growth, brought by the universal law of change in million of years, is like staircase rising above, step by step. He then asks, "Is this fact without any significance? Is this staircase built without there being an upper chamber, and does not lead us to the top floor?" This process of evolution, he further says, is not self-explanatory. It demands an explanation of its own, but no materialistic explanation can be brought forth, because if there is nothing but matter, then what is this power of thinking in man?—a question the materialist will not be able to answer. If no materialistic explanation is available, "we will not be wrong if we try to find the solution of this problem in the spiritual faith." He concludes the letter with the remark that "the way of truth cannot be traversed with the help of argumentative knowledge; it can be achieved only through intuition and meditation (Kashf wa mushahidah)."

Before we conclude, it may be carified that though Azad in his *Ghobar-e-Khatir*, speaks of several great philosophers and thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Schopenhauer, al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd and others and refers to various philosophical disciplines such as Epicureanism, Hedonism, Stoicism, Cynicism, etc., he does not seem to follow any one of them and his views about life and religion, as expressed in his letters, discussed above, are the result of his independent thinking.

NOTES AND RFFERENCES

1. First published at Calcutta in 1919, the *Tazkira* was later on edited by Malik Ram and published by Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi, in 1969.
2. It was published at Delhi in two volumes in 1931 and 1936 respectively and later on edited by Malik Ram and published by Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi, in four volumes, between 1964 and 1976.
3. The *Ghobar-e-Khatir* was published twice in 1946. It was later on edited by Malik Ram and published by Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi, in 1967, and republished with more elaborate annotation by Malik Ram, in 1983.
4. Abul Kalam Azad, *Ghobar-e-Khatir* (Sahitya Akademy, New Delhi, 1983), p. 36. The works of such great European thinkers as Goethe, Nietzche, Rousseau, Spinoza and Voltair were found in the personal library of Azad (See Mahadev Desai, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad; A Biographical Memoir*, Agra, 1946, p. 16).
5. Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi, *Azad ki Kahani Khud Azad ki Zabani*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 418.
6. See *Ghobar-e-Khatir*, pp. 38-39.
7. Ian Handerson Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad : An Intellectual and Religious Biography* (Oxford, 1988), p. 226.
8. One of the letters, being the last one in the eollection, was not included in the first two editions of the book (*Ghobar-e-Khatir*, Malik Ram's Introduction, p. xxiii).
9. *Ghobar-e-Khatir*, p. 7.
10. *Ibid.*, Letter No. 6, pp. 33-46.
11. *Ibid.*, Letter No. 9, pp. 65-76.
19. *Ibid.*, Letter No. 12, pp. 106-18.
13. *Ibid.*, Letter No. 13, pp. 119-29.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD (1888-1958)

JUSTICE K.M. YUSUF*

"He represented and he always reminded me of what I have read in history about the great men of several hundred years ago, say if I think of European history, the great men of the Renaissance, or in later period, of the Encyclopaedists who preceded the French Revolution, men of intellect, men of action. He reminds me also of what might be called the great qualities of olden days . . . the graciousness of them . . . . He was a peculiar and very special representative in a high degree of the great composite culture which had gradually grown in India." This was the glowing tribute paid by the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, from the floor of the Lok Sabha on February 24, 1958 to the sacred memory of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad whose Birth Centenary fell in 1988.

It was the good fortune of the late Maulana that the Holy Mecca was his birthplace, the ancient land of Hindustan his Motherland, and Islam his religion. There is some controversy over the date of birth of Maulana Azad : Should it be 17th or 18th August, 1888 or 11th November, 1888 ? The controversy is over the day and month and not year. At least two researchers of repute reject the 11th November as unauthentic and the rest of the scholars have no substantial materials to justify this date.

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In this autobiography, the *Tackirah*, Maulana Azad wrote that he was born in Zil-Hijjeh 1305 A.H. The month of Zil-Hijjeh is the last month of the Islamic lunar year and Zil-Hijjeh of 1305 A.H. was covered by the months of August and September 1888 of the Gregorian calendar. His name Firoze Bakht, given to the child by his parents, also indicates the Hijra era 1305. If he was born in November 1888 then the Hijra era would be 1306 and the month Muharram, and this way the name Firoze Bakht chosen by his erudite father Maulana Khairuddin becomes incorrect.

Perhaps, the fountain-spring of this controversy of day and month is Prof. Humayun Kabir's *Preface* to the 1959 Edition of the *India Wins Freedom* where the Professor writes thus : "It was Maulana Azad's wish that the book should appear in November 1958 to synchronise wish his seventieth birthday." The Maulana did mention the year of his birth as 1888 but was silent on the day and month (vide *India Wins Freedom*, p. xii, Edition 1988).

A historic letter dated the 19th February, 1963 written from Lahore by Maulana Ghulam Rasul Mehr, a close associate of and an authority on Maulana Azad, to Prof. Raizur Rahman Khan Sherwani is of special significance. In this document Mehr mentions that the Maulana himself told him that the date of his birth would be 8th or 9th Zil-Hijjeh of 1305 A.H., which means 17th or 18th August, 1888. Both Ghulam Rasul Mehr and Malik Ram, another authority on Azad, strongly dispute 11th November, 1888 because this nullifies the arithmetical calculation of his name Firoze Bakht.

The Government of India has accepted 11th November, 1888 as the date of birth of Maulana Azad thus negating the Hijra year 1305 which is part and parcel of the Maulana's original name given to him at Mecca. November 11, 1888 means Hijra era 1306 which no scholar has testified as authentic as yet. My friend Mr. Ahmad Sayeed Malihabadi, an Urdu journalist of repute, who has special study on the Maulana and whose illustrious father Maulana Abdur Razzaque Malihabadi, lived in close association with Azad, also fully endorses the date as given by Mehr with further supporting data.

One cannot forget the Nightingale of India. Mr. Sarojini Naidu's so very truthful remark : "Do not talk of Maulana's

age. He was fifty the day he was born." Azad himself realised this. During his internment at the Ahmadnagar Fort in 1942 he had developed a fascination for and used to murmur a Persian couplet, meaning :

> The taste of me may be insipid; but my worth is great; I am a fruit grown before the season.

There is a famous Persian proverb : *Buzurgi ba-aql ast ne ba-sal, tawangari ba-dil ast ne ba-mal.* It means : Greatness proceeds from wisdom and not from age; generosity proceeds from large-heartedness and not from possession of wealth. If ever there was a manifestation of the truth of this saying, it was when Azad, at the age of 16, delivered a discourse on no less a subject than *Rationalism in Islam* at an annual meeting of the Anjuman-i-Himayat-ul-Islam at Lahore before a distinguished gathering of scholars. His learned discourse, his wisdom of thought and his remarkable erudition, baffled men like the celebrated Maulana Altaf Husain Hali and Allama Muhammad Iqbal who, fortunately were present on the spot. Poet Hali, out of astonishment, described Azad as "an old head on young shoulders." At the young age of 34 he had the unique honour of being elected the President of the Indian National Congress, which was a great tribute paid to his intellect and statesmanship.

Azad's famous commentary on the Holy Book, known as *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, though incomplete, is universally accepted as a towering monument to the author's erudition and originality of thought, and stands amongst the foremost interpretation of Islamic phiiosophy. It is generally believed that the Opening Chapter of seven verses—*Surah-Al-Fatiha*—of the Book is the essence of the *Quran*. In his commentary on this Chapter covering 174 pages, Azad gives an account of the basic principles of the *Quran*. Nothing like this has ever been written in the whole realm of Islamic religious literature. "It should be carried to every house," comments Allama Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, a great Orientalist and a progressive theologian of the Shibli school of thought.

Maulana Azad's writings have left a permanent mark in Urdu literature and journalism. He was a rare force in Urdu and raised this language to a height that had before then been

considered unassailable. "The rhetorical eloquence of *Al-Hilal*, the philosophic depth of *Al-Balagh*, the long, rolling, rhythmic style of *Tazkirah*, the thought-provoking digressions, the relish of the fine, personal touch in the refined prose of *Ghubar-i-Khatir*—all these can be traced to his deep scholarship coupled with his sensitive and cultivated spirit." So great have been Azad's contributions to literature and philosophy that even if he had never entered politics his name would have ever remained shining.

Equally vast was his knowledge of the history and literature of Iran. He was perfectly at home with the Persian and Arabic languages and spoke it with marked eloquence and fluency. His memory was a rich treasure-house of all the best poetry of the East; the poems of Saadi, Hafiz, Khayyam, Anwari, Rumi, Khusrau, Saib, Naziri, Urfi, Kalim and Ghalib as well as Mutanabbi, Ibn Duraid, Abul Ala al-Maarri, Abu Nawas and Ibn-ul-Farid enriched his talks. Well-versed in Islamic studies and literature, he was, perhaps, one of the most learned men in the Islamic world; and, unhesitatingly, occupies an exalted rank among the greatest scholars of the world. Impressed by his encyclopaedic erudition, Saeed Naficy, a celebrated Iranian scholar of international fame, remarked : "It is my feeling that very few have been his equal and perhaps none his superior."

After becoming the first Education Minister of Free India he could no more devote much of his time to writing and study. His last writing was an Introduction to the *History of Philosophy : Eastern and Western* published by the Government of India in two volumes, which received approbation from all over the world. The Introduction begins with a Persian couplet which compares the Universe to an old manuscript of which the first and the last pages were lost. Another piece of his outstanding writing of this period was the 16-page Foreword to S.N. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty-seven* wherein the Maulana masterly diagnosed the causes and the background of the 1857 Revolt. It is worth-studying by any serious student of the medieval and modern Indian history. The opening paragraph of Part X of the Foreword runs ; "Two facts stand out clearly in the midst of the tangled story of the Rising of 1857. The first is the remarkable sense of unity among the Hindu and Muslims of India in this period. The other is the deep loyalty which the people of India felt for the Moghul

Crown." This diagnosis of the Maulana, with which some historians might differ, speaks volume about our past history. "Azad was first and last an educationist—an educationist in the wider and deep sense of the word, i.e., one passionately concerned with the inculcation of the right ideals and values and the attitude in the people."

Maulana Azad was dragged into politics, to quote the words of Prof. Humayun Kabir, by the "sheer force of circumstances." His ideal in politics was the late Deshbandhu C.R. Das. In *India Wins Freedom* the Maulana has expressed great admiration for Deshbandhu. He says : "Mr. Das occupies a very special position in the history of our national struggle. He was a man of great vision and breadth of imagination. At the same time he had a practical mind which looked at every question from the point of view of a realist. He had the courage of his convictions and stood up fearlessly for any position he regarded as being right . . . . I am convinced that if he had not died a premature death, he would have created a new atmosphere in the country."

Azad proclaimed his political credo through *Al-Hilal* in 1912. The publication of this Urdu paper took the Muslims of India by storm and deeply moved the Muslim intelligentsia as well. His powerful writings swept across the country and galvanised the hearts and minds of the older and the younger generations alike. *Al-Hilal* formulated a new political faith, created a revolutionary stir among the masses, and "soon became the focus where the resurgent spirit of Indian Moslems found its finest expression."

His services to the country as a sagacious statesman, and ardent patriot and a great intellectual are inestimable. For nearly 50 years he stood as a champion of nationalism and progress, freedom and democracy. He suffered for his convictions throughout his public career. As a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity, he always stood for national unity and communal harmony. He made no difference between Hindu and Muslim, Sikh and Christian. He felt that in India, a homeland of many races and religions, all should fight unitedly for achieving national emancipation and work for national consolidation and progress. He held fast to Hindu-Muslim unity and stood firmly by it like a rock to the last inspite of uncharitable criticisms from his co-religionists. Delivering the Presidential Address at the 1940 Ramgarh Session

of the Indian National Congress, he declared : "I am a Muslim and this fills me with pride . . . But in addition to these feelings, I am also the possessor of another, which has been created by the stark realities of my external life. The soul of Islam is not a barrier to this belief; in fact, it guides me in this path. *I am proud to be an Indian.* I am an integral part of this unified and impartible nation. The glory of this nation is incomplete without this valuable component. I am an essential factor in its composition and I shall never give up this claim."

In 1940 when the Hindu-Muslim relation was reaching a breaking point, Azad was once again elected President of the Congress and occupied that high office till 1946—for six successive terms. This was the most momentous period of Indo-British relations when negotiations for transfer of power were carried on between the Congress and the British Government, and most delicate and momentous questions were discussed. He acted as the sole spokesman of the Congress Party during these negotiations. The object in selecting a Muslim as President during the period was to affirm the Congress stand to be a national party rising above the division of Hindus and Muslims. "The Congress trusted his wisdom and integrity and he came out like pure gold through this most trying ordeal" and was acclaimed by Mahatma Gandhi and his dear friend Nehru. Azad's counsel was sought to resolve all complicated tangles and it was freely and frankly given without fear or favour. The question of popularity or otherwise never weighed with him.

Maulana Azad as the Union Education Minister presided over the educational and cultural destinies of this great country till the last day of his life. The portfolio of Natural Resources and Scientific Research (afterwards renamed as Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs) was also under his charge. The 11 years of his Ministership have been most momentous in the history of educational development in India. "The appointment of the University Education Commission (1948) with their report of 1949; the appointment of the Secondary Education Commission (1952) with their report of 1953; the reorganisation of the All-India Council for Technical Education from its inception on 30 November, 1945, to its amended form of today; the chain of laboratories of scientific research established during the period; the establishment of the Kharagpur Institute of Higher Technology;

the rapid development of the Indian Institute of Science; the estabilshment of the University Grants Commission with considerable financial resources—these are some of the highlights in the animated scene." During these eventful years the budget of the Union Education Ministry rose from rupees two crores to rupees thirty crores, which tells convincingly of the development of educational projects and schemes in various ways.

Azad's notable contribution as Education Minister was the establishment of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations at New Delhi of which he was the first President. This organisation was set up with the main object of establishing and strengthening the cultural relations between India and the West Asian and Eastern Countries. The ICCR Library was started with 8,000 volumes presented by the Maulana from his personal collection. It gave an impetus to the study of Asiatic cultural problems and in promoting cultural activities in India and abroad. At his initiative, the ICCR undertook the publication of two important journals—the *Indo-Asian Culture* in English and *Al-Saqafat-ul-Hind* in Arabic; and extended patronage to the *Indo-Iranica*, a bi-lingual (English-Persian) journal, being published by our Iran Society of Calcutta. The *Indo-Iranica* is a living tribute to the memory of Maulana Azad. They all go a long way in creating profound good-will and cultural understanding between India and West and East Asian countries. The Indo-Iranian Culture Agreement of 1956 was also the fruit of his efforts which paved the way of cultural friendship and exchange of scholars between the two ancient countries. While in Iran in 1952 the Maulana was honoured with the Doctorate of Literature (*Honoris causa*) by the Teheran University.

The Iran Society pays its respectful homage to the sacred memory of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on completion of his Birth Centenary. "As a fighter he was redoubtable, as a scholar he was profound, as an educationist he was versatile and as a nationalist he was unsurpassed." "We have had great men and we will have great men; but I do submit that the peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else," testifies Nehru. "There is no doubt that we will not see the like of him again," affirms Radhakrishnan. He was a personality which honoured the age; and he has now gone into history, blazing a trail for us to

follow. "The best way to pay him homage . . . is to remember his lofty ideals, abjure all anti-national activities and work for complete unity of outlook and purpose in all our undertakings" (Zakir Husain).

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD : A BRIEF SURVEY OF HIS EVENTFUL CAREER

HIRA LALL CHOPRA

> "I have had the privilege of being associated with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in national work since 1920. In the knowledge of Islam, he is surpassed by no one. He is a profound Arabic scholar. His nationalism is as robust as his faith in Islam. That he is today the supreme head of the Indian National Congress has deep meaning which should not be lost sight of by every student of Indian politics." (Mahatma Gandhi on May 18, 1940).

The family traditions have played a vital part in shaping the destiny of Maulana Azad. Revolutionary-ism has been the special trait of the line to which Azad belonged. One of the early ancestors of the Maulana, Sheikh Jamal-ud-din, a profound scholar and a Muslim divine of great repute, having to his credit a number of books which are held in high esteem to this day and among which is celebrated commentary on the most trustworthy text of Hadith (Islamic Traditions)—recognised as an authority by which most Muslim divines swear, revolted against the innovation of Akbar's Din-i-Ilahi, thus incurring the displeasure of the Great Emperor. He was patronised by Akbar's foster-brother, Mirza Aziz Kokaltash, but anticipating some trouble in future, he left for Mecca. This first known ancestor of the Maulana left the proud legacy of *Satyagraha* for him,

Later on in the times of Jehangir another ancestor of the Maulana, Sheikh Muhammad refused to do *Kornish* (obeisance) to the Emperor as in his view, it did not behove the learned to lay prostrate before wealth. He refused to bend his knees to Baal and was sentenced to be imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior for four years.

It also remained a kind of family tradition not to accept any office or position of power; but Shaikh Sirajuddin, a great grand-father of the Maulana, accepted the Chief Judgeship and broke the tradition.

Parentage

The Maulana's father, Maulana Muhammad Khairuddin was a learned divine and a *sufi*. He wrote numerous books both in Arabic and Persian and his life and temperament were coloured by simplicity and contemplation of the Sufis. He lived in Delhi, where he had thousands of disciples and his clientale extended up to Gujarat, Kathiawar and Bombay.

The Indian War of Independence waged in 1857 left a special scar-mark on the scholars of those days, who were specially chosen for persecution and victimisation by the British Govern-ment. Shamsul Ulema Maulana Muhammad Hussain Azad narrates in his own facile way as to how his father. Mulla Baqir was shot dead in public; Dr. Nazir Ahmad and Sir Syed Ahmad insinuate to the hardships meted out to the learned in those troublous days. The descriptions of Ghalib bear clear testimony to this fact that because the scholars wielded great power in those days both with the public and the monarchy, they were picked up specially for the tortrue. The natural consequence of this indis-criminate victimization was that many scholars had no other choice but to leave Delhi. Muhammad Hussain Azad ran to Patiala, Ludhiana and ultimately to Lahore, Maulana Altaf Hussain Hali to Lahore and the celebrated father of Maulana Azad, Maulana Muhammad Khairuddin went away to Mecca to settle down there permanently. Nawab Yusuf Ali Khan of Rampur, who was one of his disciples, made all arrangements for him so that he could safely be escorted to Bombay and from there to Mecca.

The then Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid, who had heard of Maulana Khairuddin's learning and scholarship invited him to

Constantinople and with his munificent patronage many of his books were printed in Cairo. On his return from there, the Maulana helped in the collection of funds for the Zubaida canal in Mecca. In Mecca, he married the daughter of a very famous divine, Shaikh Wetri. Of this noble lady was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad born on 11th November, 1888. Thus from both of his parents, Maulana Azad inherited the grand legacy of learning.

Early Life

Maulana Azad was named Ahmad originally and commonly called by his father as 'Firoz Bakht'. He spent his childhood in Mecca and Medina where his father's house was considered to be a great centre of learning. For his early education, he bent his knees before his renowned father and was bred up in Arabic atmosphere and culture for the first ten years of his life.

Maulana Khairuddin yielding to the pressure of his ardent disciple, Haji Abdul Wahid from Bombay and importunate demands of many others like him, decided to return to India in 1898 and settle down in Calcutta. Here the Maulana (Abul Kalam Azad) spent the formative years of his life. Arabic was his mother-tongue, as his mother knew no other language and he learnt Urdu from his father which enabled Azad to carry on his schooling here. He, under the strict and disciplined care of his father, made a phenomenal progress in his studies and qualified for the *Darse Nizami* in 4 years, which normally takes 14 years to complete. He became a pupil-teacher at the early age of 14 and started studying and teaching every branch of knowledge in the Oriental style. His father abhored the idea of imparting English education to him, so in 1905 he sent him to the world-famous university of Al-Azhar in Cairo for two years. It was after the death of his father in 1909, that Maulana Azad started learning English language, and his insatiable thirst for knowledge accomplished him with all modern standards of scholarship. With all these literary equipments, he could not reconcile himself of the life of a divine. He was writing articles on varied topics which attracted the attention of many scholars including Altaf Hussain Hali, Muhammad Iqbal, Nazir Ahmad and others.

As a Writer

At the early age of 14 or 15, he brought out *Lisanus Sidq* (The Voice of Truth) a journal which stands out as a landmark in

his literary career. He ventuıed to review the famous *Life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* written by Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali. He came ınto prominence at Lahore when in the annual sitting of the Anjuman Himayatul Islam, the editor of *Lisanus Sidq*, was requested to deliver the main oration of the year on the topic of "The Rational Basis of Religion". To the utter surprise of the celebrated old scholars of the country, this young stripling came out marvellously successful in his assignment. Maulana Hali thought that the lad must be the son of Maulana Azad, who reviewed his book, but there was no limit to his astonishment when he came to know that the led was no other than the Maulana himself. Poet Hali described him as 'an old head on young shoulders' and predicted for him to be the 'coming man in Muslim India'—a prophecy which came out to be too true and precise.

As a Poet

Maulana in the early years of his life, composed Urdu poetry also. It was his poetical compositions and his writings in *Makhzan* of Lahore—a journal brought out by Sir Abdul Qadir in the early years of this century which gave to the world writers like Azad, Prem Chand, Iqbal, Swami Rama Tirtha, Nairang and Zafar Ali Khan—that Maulana Shibli came to know about this genius in prose and poetry. He had the same misconception about him when he met him first in Bombay as Maulana Hali had, that the lad was Maulana Azad's son. *Azad* was his *Takhallus* (poetic name). He took part in many Urdu *mushairas* of Calcutta. His pseudonym *Azad* survived his period of poetry and was attached to him more than his original name.

As a Journalist

After his return from Cairo, he found Muslims divided into various camps. Sir Syed's policy of wooing the British would not satisfy the nationalists of that period. Bengal, the adopted home of Maulana Azad, was partitioned and the Hindu element in the national struggle for freedom was making valuable contribution and the reactionary forces in Islam tried to keep back the Muslims from joining hands with the Congress in country's struggle for the achievement of independence. There was no press, platform or any other forum for publicity and propaganda for nationalist Muslims in India Spasmodic articles here and there

would be drowned into the din of reactionary literature which flooded the minds of Muslims here. His articles in *Al-Nadwa*, the monthly organ of Maulana Shibli on religions topics quoting profuse Arabic authorities especially the modern trend in Muslim thought as envisaged in regenerated Muslim countries of the Middle East were nothing short of a treat to his readers. He presented a catholic and a more comprehensive view of Islam contrary to the current Mulla-ie conception of it. His early Urdu literary articles were published in the *Khudang-i-Nazar* edited by Munshi Naubat Rai Nazar, a great Hindu literateur of Urdu. To educate the Muslim masses, he started his journalistic career in the bi-weekly, the *Vakil* of Amritsar. This paper was owned by Ghulam Qadir *Farrukh* and expressed moderate nationalist views aligning itself partially with the Congress of those days. The financial condition of the journal compelled it to become a monthly from a bi-weekly paper. Being incompatible to conform with the extreme views expressed by the Maulana, it was left by Azad who came back to Calcutta to start his own weekly, the *Al-Hilal* which became a pioneer in Urdu journalism for reasons more than one. With mature political thought and original line of advance in expression combined with exquisite language employed therein, the *Al-Hilal* captured the minds of Muslims spontaneously. The get-up of the journal brought out in Arabic type, could safely vie with any first-rate weekly of the West both in form and substance. From its very start 46 years ago, it propounded a new line of thought, you not fully developed in Urdu journalism. A background of Arabic religious literature, accompanied with a mastery of Persian and Urdu poets, gave a particular flavour to the journal all its own. Maulana Mohd. Ali, the redoubtable fighter in the cause of Indian freedom, on the first appearance of the *Al-Hilal* on 1st of June, 1912, remarked only about its form and get-up in his weekly, the *Comrade* in the following terms :

> "We can well understand the enormous labour and expense that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, its talented editor, must have gone through before launching this weekly journal. It strikes a new line in journalism by including pictorial illustrations as a permanent feature in its columns. The adoption of the Turkish type, though not exactly an innovation, is a welcome departure from the obsolete methods which inspite of

their clumsiness and tedium still retain a paralysing hold on the Urdu Press of the country. Literary and scientific discussions and Muslim educational affairs in Turkey, Persia, Morocco and the Islamic world in general."

There is no mention of the policy of the journal anywhere as Maulana Mohd. Ali in those days, was pursuing the policy of the Aligarh School of thought. No doubt, the adventures of Sir Syed Ahmed had fought a successful crusade against the forces of bigotry and darkness, the crusade launched by the Maulana was, if not more, equally successful against the forces of political reaction and narrow communalism.

Within six months of its existence, the circulation of the *Al-Hilal* reached the coveted figure of eleven thousands, a number unknown, even by the important English journals of the day. Reactionary dovecots and worshippers of British bureaucrary strove every nerve to cut its circulation, but they met with an examplary failure. A brilliant paper, written in a new dynamic style, amazingly forceful, the *Al-Hilal* had a prodigious influence. It shocked the conservatives and created a furore and within a very short time, its circulation reached 25,000. The effect was miraculous and the London Branch of the Muslim League, contrary to all expectations, appealed to the Muslims of India to cast in their lot with the Hindus. The leadership of the Aligarh School, which had hindered the political progress of the Muslims and whose main theme was to express loyalty to the British rule, found itself quite helpless in the face of this new political awakening, which was the result of the *Al-Hilal.* Syed Wazir Hasan (later Justic Sir Wazir Hasan) the then Secretary of the All-India Muslim League came to Calcutta to have discussions with the Maulana as a consequence of which it was found that at the April, 1913 Annual Session of the League at Lucknow, the creed bacame "the attainment of *suitable* Self-Government for India" instead of "loyalty to British Government and the attainment of the rights of the Mussalmans" and thus the League for the first time in its history came to have a political objective.

The First World War came in 1914 when the *Al-Hilal* was at the climax of its glory. Maulana Azad had old connections with the revolutionary party in Bengal and the Criminal Intelligence Department were on the look out for materials calculated to

implicate the Maulana. The *Pioneer* of Allahabad, at the instance of Sir James Meston, wrote editorially against the *Al-Hilal* with the caption, "*Pro-Germanism in Calcutta*" suggesting to the Government to take immediate action against the paper and its editor, who had the courage to tell unpalatable things about the Allies, without regard to consequences. Under Defence of India Act, the *Al-Hilal* was forced to stop publication and Abul Kalam's irrepressible genius blossomed out in the *Al-Balagh* which had scarcely been in existence for a few months when the Government of Bengal externed him from the province.

Internment

On April 7, 1915, the Bengal Government expelled Maulana Azad from the province and orders were passed against him prohibiting him from entering the Punjab, the United Provinces and Madras. The Maulana repaired to Ranchi for reasons of health, where the Government interned him until the beginning of the year 1920. The Martial Law in the Punjab and the inhuman torture showered there by Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer culminating in the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh brought Hindus and Muslims together to face the bullets of the British. When Maulana came out of his internment, the Khilafat question had made the atmosphere tense in the whole of India; but Azad recognised intrinsic potentiality of Gandhiji's programme of non-co-operation and plunged into it heart and soul. His relentless and valuable work in the Khilafat and non-co-operation movements brought him in the fore-front very soon. His matchless eloquence held audiences spell-bound, and once in a special conference of the Ulema (divines) in Lahore, it was resolved to appoint Maulana Azad, the Imam (spiritual head) of the Muslims of India, which he vehemently declined.

Prince of Wales Visit

The Congress had decided to boycott all functions connected with the visit of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward the VIII and now the Duke of Windsor) as this lavish extravagance could not be afforded by the poor people of this country who were seething with discontent and were in a chronic state of starvation. The Congress declared this show as "an outrage and a crime". Maulana Azad was arrested on December 10, 1921, when he gave

his historic statement in the Court which said—

> "The inequities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriages of injustice. In that list we observed a holy personage like Jesus, who had to stand in his time before a foreign court and convicted even as the worst of criminals ! We see also in the same list Socrates, who was sentenced to be poisoned for no other crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of that great Florentine martyr to truth, the inventor Galileo, who refused to belie his observations and researches merely because their avowal was a crime in the eyes of constituted authority. I have called Jesus a man, because to my belief he was a holy person who had brought the heavenly message of love and righteousness; but he was greater even than this in the eyes of millions of people. Consequently what a wonderful place this convict's dock is where the most righteous as well as the most criminal people are made to stand !

Further on, making the achievement of Independence and the shaking off of the foreign rule as an article of his faith, he declared in the same statement :

> "It is my belief that liberty is the natural and God-given gift of man. No man and no bureaucracy consisting of men has got the right to make the servants of God, its own slaves. However attractive to the euphimism invented for 'subjugation' and 'slavery', still slavery is slavery, and it is opposed to the will and cannons of God. I, therefore, consider it a bounden duty to liberate my country from its yoke."

This historic statement of classical importance is full of historical facts which go to prove 'freedom' as the inherent right of man. Boldly he declared that, "Islam defines it a duty of Muhammadans to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the nation."

The Maulana was awarded a year's hard labour in this case.

Commentary on the Quran

He did not surrender his scholarship during his political career and his universally-applauded Urdu annotated translation of the *Holy Quran* was produced in the twenties of this century when he was thickly engaged in his political struggles. This commentary is held in high esteem even by those who do not see eye to eye with him in matters social and political, because the Maulana's profound learning and deeply critical scholarship are undisputed not only among Muslim scholars and divines in India but in other Islamic lands too. He wrote the major part of it in Ranchi during the period of his internment there. He was at his best when left alone with his books and his intellectual pursuits. He was unusually well-read man, of extensive interests; his private library was said to be among the best in India, he later on, presented to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi. He was a profound scholar of religion, discussing religious subjects dispassionately and historically. He was a scintillating conversationalist and a powerful and effective orator.

Besides being a staunch nationalist and a writer, he was the greatest Urdu speaker that India had ever produced. His speeches were collected by certain Indian publishers and they rank among the master-pieces of Urdu Literature and can favourably be compared with any orations of the world—logic, reason, rhetoric and literary excellence, all are equally blended in them.

Congress President

On release from jail in January 1923, he plunged actively into the Congress work and in September 1923 at Delhi a special Session of the Congress was held under the presidentship of the Maulana. He was the first to hold this office at so young an age. Council-entry was the main problem before the country and the Maulana in his address presented his compromise formula, which was, that those who believed in the Council-entry programme should be permitted to do in order to capture those bodies and non-co-operate from within, while those who did not believe in that programme should devote themselves to carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress. The formula was adopted, and the Parliamentary programme of the Congress thus came into being. It saved the Congress from being divided into two warring camps and the masses from demoralisation which would have

followed on account of Gandhiji's imprisonment. The Ali Brothers, after a little bit of vacillation also took the same attitude, which was practically endorsed by Gandhiji after his release in 1924.

Spiritual Enlightenment

Later on, it was found that even the nationalist Muslims were drifting away from the Congress. Ali Brothers, though they attended the Lahore Congress of 1929 which declared Complete Independence at the country's goal, were getting further away from this national organisation and started thinking in terms of Muslims more than anything else. Dr. Ansari, the erstwhile stalwart of the Congress showed less of enthusiasm and chose to become slightly inert; but this must be said to the credit of Maulana Azad that he not only stuck fast to the Congress, but put all his might, influence and scholarship for this organisation. John Gunther called Azad 'a part of the brain and spiritual enlightenment' for the Congress and he was cent per cent correct in his assessment of the man.

The critical situation in the country which resulted in Salt Satyagraha necessitated someone to be at the helm of the affairs of the Congress, who should be strong and vigorous in the implementation of the Congress objectives and none else but Maulana Azad could acquit himself off safely from this onerous duty and for the second time, he became the President of the Congress in 1940.

The Maulana again suffered imprisonment in the movement of 1930-32. He was elected President in 1940 when he aligned himself with the new ideological, international and anti-fascist phase of the Congress started by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1936. According to Yusuf Meherally, the great Socialist Youth leader of Bombay, "Azad is the most radical among the old guard of politicians". He is militant in his nationalist aims and has never allowed himself to be diverted from it. His excellent mind is at its best in a Committee and the Congress of the past four decades owes much to his clear-thinking far-sightedness and political sagacity.

From 1940, he was President of the Congress upto 1946—a period during which many eventful things happened which occupy a permanent place in the history of India. The Quit-India movement of 1942 was the biggest of them all and the Maulana was imprisoned in Ahmednagar Fort along with other top-ranking leaders of the Congress. He guided the destinies of the Congress

during this period both from inside and outside the prison. He acted as the sole spokesman of the Congress during the negotiations with the Cripps Mission in 1942 and again with British Cabinet Mission in 1946. In 1945, he went straight from prison to Simla to participate in the deliberations of the Leaders' Conference convened by Lord Wavell to see how far the people of India could concede to the British desire of continuing to 'divide and rule'. But the Maulana was too shrewd for British diplomacy and he did not succumb to any high-sounding empty promises. It may undisputably be said that the Congress had no greater diplomat in its ranks and once Maulana Azad had seen and accepted a position, there was no one who had his intellectual resourcefulness to explain it from all possible points of view, in all possible aspects.

Great Oriental Scholar

A great Oriental scholar,—his absorption in his studies gave him a kind of predilection for loneliness,—and though a finished conversationalist, he inclined most towards reticence. His contribution to a debate was ever valuable and he could sweep the audience off their feet by the direct, simple, incisive eloquence of his speech. He was very deeply read in the philosophies of the East and the West, he had shaped the nationalists' movements even outside India, by the power of his pen. His Arabic writings have affected the history of Egypt and Afghanistan and his name is respected wherever the Arabic and Persian tongues are read and spoken. He may justly be compared to the pre-Revolution philosophers of France—the Encyclopaedists.

He is Abused

The Muslim League under the leadership of late Mr. Jinnah hurled all sorts of abuses on Maulana Azad on account of his tenacious adherence to the Congress, and to his non-conformity to partitioning of the country as envisaged by the Muslim League. This must be said to the credit of Maulana that he in spite of all these provocations, remained as calm and serene as a scholar of his calibre was expected to be. This showed his firmness and towering personality, which could not be dwarfed by others' political prejudices whether born of ignorance or of malice. He did not utter a single syllable against his political opponents, who

ultimately came to grief themselves when they realized their own fault in being swayed off from the right track by political opportunists.

Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind

From the very beginning he associated himself with the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind—a body of Muslim divines of India, and shaped its policy towards nationalist ideals as enunciated by the Congress. This body had its religious followers among the masses by the millions who subscribed to the advanced political views of the divines. They suffered in numerous ways for their convictions but steadfastly opposed the Muslim League in its efforts to divide the country. They exploded the League's theory of "Mussalmans in Danger" and explained the implications of division to Muslims, who, if not prior to the partition, at least after it, realized the truth of it and stood by it. The other Muslim divine of similar calibre was the 'Prisoner of Malta', Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, who preceded Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in death just by a few weeks and both of them had to undergo untold persecutions at the hands of the Muslims as well as the British rulers; but undaunted they marched forward to attain their contemplated goal. Today, the Jamiat is the undisputed spokesman of the fifty million Muslims of India. Maulana Hifzur Rahman, a Member of Parliament, and the present leader of the Jamiat, is an untiring worker, who has worked for the last quarter of a century with these two accredited leaders of the Muslims—Maulana Azad and Hussain Ahmad Madani, and with the death of them both, the mantle has fallen on his shoulders to guide the destinies of his co-religionists in India. He had his training with these two leaders and he commands a country-wide respect in political, social and literary circles.

As Minister for Education

In January 1947 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad joined the Interim Government when Mr. Asaf Ali was appointed as India's Ambassador in Washington. He became Minister of Education and later on in May 1952 was given additional charge of the portfolio of Natural Resources and Scientific Research. He started the Indian Council for Cultural Relations—an organization to establish and strengthen cultural contacts between India and other

countries of the East. It gave an impetus to the study of Asiatic problems as they presented themselves at various times. As a matter of fact, even the *pancha shila*—the principle of peaceful-co-existence is the outcome of the efforts of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. *The Indo-Asian Culture* in English, *Al-Thaqafat* in Arabic languages are the main journals published by the Council and the *Indo-Iranica* in English and Persian—the quarterly of the Iran Society—is published under the patronage of the Council and they all go a long way in creating good-will and harmony between India and other countries in general and Middle-Eastern and Far-Eastern countries in particular.

It was under the inspiration of the late Maulana that the I.C.C.R. started lectures under the auspices of its local branches on topics cultural and literary. Today in every big town of India, the branches of the Council are functioning very successfully and affording people to understand their neighbour-countries in a better way. The Council purchases valuable publications and disburses them in other countries to establish closer cultural contacts. Teachers and scholars are exchanged for lectures and studies in Universities of India and countries of the Middle East.

The patronage of the late Maulana Azad given to the Iran Society has enabled the Society to carry out its projects in various ways. In 1952, the Society celebrated the Millenary of Al-Biruni and brought out Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume and the I.C.C.R. purchased a large number of copies of the publication for distribution among libraries and important cultural organisations of the world. Encouraged by the success of this celebration, the Society again undertook to commemorate Avicenna's Millenary in 1956. The help offered by the Council on both these occasions was substantial. Besides this, the Council subsidises *Indo-Iranica*, the quarterly of the Iran Society and helps in the distribution of this journal to other countries and Embassies. This was all due to Maulana's special interest in forging a happy cultural union between India and the Islamic world.

Today, the name of the I.C.C.R. is a guarantee for sincere efforts in promoting cultural activities in the country and abroad. The Council has been according receptions to various ruling monarchs of the Eastern countries and inviting eminent professors from outside to lecture on Eastern topics. Many Indian scholars are studying today in Eastern and European Universities to equip

themselves with modern methods of knowledge, and it is all due to the financial and other help given by the I.C.C.R. under the guidance of the late Maulana.

Education Budget

In January, 1947 when Maulana Azad took up as the Union Education Minister, the total budget for Education was Rs. two crores and in 1957 after 10 years of Maulana's Ministry the budget rose to Rs. thirty crores, which tells a tale of the development of educational projects of the country in various ways.

History of Philosophy

It was during the Maulana's Ministry that a *History of Philosophies of the East and West* was written in two volumes, which received approbation from all over the world. The *Foreword* written by the Maulana himself interspersed with Arabic and Persian quotations points towards the insight and the clear mindedness of the Maulana even in the abstruse philosophical problems.

Visit Abroad

In May, 1951, Maulana Azad paid a visit to the countries of the East and West. He visited United Kingdom, Egypt, Iran and other countries and left happy memories in the hearts of Indians living there and permanent place for India in the hearts of the people of those countries.

Indo-Iranian Cultural Agreement

It was on the 1st of December, 1956 that an Indo-Iranian Cultural Agreement was signed by both the countries through their respective plenipotentiaries—Maulana Azad on behalf of the Government of India and His Excellency Dr. A.A. Hekmat, the Iranian Ambassador in India on behalf of the Iranian Government.

Though the cultural relations between these two countries date back to the dawn of history, this Cultural Agreement gave them a concrete shape. The two governments undertook to spare no efforts in reciprocal exchange of books, publications, students, teachers and research scholars; to popularise the language and literature pertaining to each other, to do all that was necessary for the growth of good-will between the people of Iran and India and

the strengthening of cultural ties between them. The pact revived the ancient spiritual link between the two countries which during the last two centuries was rendered stagnant and slack by the tide of times and various odd reasons. The two friendly countries—Iran and India always collaborated with each other in upholding the torch of knowledge and extension of each other's culture. With this Agreement they revived that golden era to serve art and literature in co-operation with each other. Fourteen Articles of the Agreement go a long way in strengthening cultural ties between India and Iran due to the ceaseless efforts of Maulana Azad and Dr. A.A. Hekmat both Patrons of the Iran Society. The Agreement was typed out both in Hindi and Persian and envisaged a new era in cultural relations between the two countries.

History of 1857

In his Presidential address at the 31st Session of the Indian Historical Records Commission, Mysore, on January 25, 1955, Maulana Azad expressed a desire for the need for a new evaluation of the happenings of 1857 which were depicted differently by different chroniclers. Dr. S.N. Sen, the then Director of the National Archives was entrusted with this task and he managed to bring out the book entitled "1857" on 10th May, 1957 commemorating the centenary of the First War of Indian Independence. This work could be accomplished only due to the interest shown by the late Maulana.

Speeches as Minister

His speeches as Minister of Education have fortunately been collected and published by the Publications Division of the Government of India wherein we find the Maulana's mature thoughts pertaining to various phases of education explained most explicitly. This volume of 340 pages gives a clear idea about the Maulana's plans which he wanted to introduce for the education of country's masses. This will prove to be a beaconlight for the educationists everywhere.

Pensions to Litterateurs

Maulana Azad introduced a scheme through the Education Ministry by which financial help was given to many literary figures in the country who could not carry on their literary pursuits for

want of necessary means. Prominent and old poets and journalists of the country owe their old-age pensions to the late Maulana and those who benefited from this scheme of the Maulana, belonged to all denominations without distinction of caste, creed or colour. Litterateurs of note are the recepients of this help due to Maulana's sympathy with Letters and Men of Letters.

Died in Harness

Maulana Azad was active till his very end. On the 14th of February, 1958, he spoke in the Indian Council for Cultural Relations about the strides made by this organisation in various fields of Arts and Culture (which appears separately at the end of this article) and on the very next day, i.e., on the 15th of February, 1958, he addressed a vast concourse of people on the occasion of the All India Urdu Conference at the time of its inauguration by the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (which also appears separately at the end of this article).

The Maulana, on that occasion, made very pregnant remarks about the language problem in this country and clarified the position of Urdu in India. He said that because the Constituent Assembly had adopted Hindi as the national and the official language of India, no other language, much less Urdu, could call itself to be a rival of Hindi. On the adoption of the Constitution, the entire question of rivalry with Hindi had ceased. He spoke and stayed there for about three hours and listened to the speeches of Pt. Nehru, Col. Zaidi, President of the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu, Pandit Sunder Lal, Maulana Hifzur Rahman, Chairman of the Reception Committee and Dr. Tara Chand, the President of the Conference.

Maulana Azad died in harness in the service of the country now to serve as beacon-light for posterity to take to his path of love and service in the interest of the country as a whole. May his soul rest in peace and his life be a source of inspiration to the youth of the country for her uplift and betterment. Amen !

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MAULANA AZAD AND THE PARTITION OF INDIA**

UMA SINGH*

It is ironical and a pity that the birth centenaries of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru have coincided with the release of the 30 pages of the former's autobiography which has generated so much controversy and heartburning among the Indians in general. It is uncalled for because a careful study of these thirty pages does not reveal anything new. It is merely a repetition of what the Maulana had said in his autobiography.

Undoubtedly, both Nehru and Azad were great nationalist leaders. That such prejudices have been coloured by the bloody transfer of power in August 1947, cannot be denied even after a lapse of forty-one years. India had won her freedom but at a very heavy cost. In the struggle between the Communalist and the Nationalist Muslims the former won. It is a very controversal question whether the demand for Pakistan was genuine or a mere bargaining counter but one cannot delve into this question here because of the paucity of space. The Pakistan resolution was the declaration of open war between the Communal and the Nationalist Muslims. The idea of partition was regarded by The Nationalist Muslims, Azad in particular, as disastrous not

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only for the country but also for the Muslims themselves. He had begun his jouranalistic and political career before the First World War as a Pan-Islamist. After he came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, he advocated secular Nationalism. He was a staunch Nationalist and remained so. With the death of Dr. M.A. Ansari, Maulana Azad was undisputably the most important nationalist Muslim leader in the country.

The Muslim Community was now definitely divided into two opposing camps with no common ground between them. Within five weeks of the passage of the Pak resolution, an assembly of nationalist Muslims under the name of the Azad Muslim Conference was convened in Delhi. The Conference met under the presidentship of Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh, the then Chief Minister of Sind. The number of participants in the conference is said to be between 50,000 and 75,000. Large delegations, including many prominent persons, had come from all parts of India. The following is the summary of the first three resolutions passed at the Conference :

(1) India is the common homeland of various religions and communities. Thus the Muslims, whose objective is to secure their natural as well as religious rights think that Pakistan will not be in keeping with the dignity and the traditions of their community in the struggle for freedom.

(2) No future Constitution of India will be acceptable except one that is made by the people of India themselves through their representatives elected on the basis of adult franchise. In this Constitution, provisions shall be made for the protection of the rights of Muslims in accordance with the wishes of the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly.

(3) In the view of this Conference the proposal to divide India into Hindu India and Muslim India is impracticable and detrimental to the interests of the country in general and of the Muslims in particular. It will be used to put obstacles in the way of Indian freedom and exploited by the British.

The nationalist organisations participating in the Azad

Muslim Conference represented the views and sentiments of many millions of Indian Muslims. Their common objects were national unity and opposition to Pakistan. But unfortunately their interests were mainly centred on their own—sectional or local religious, economic and political. Besides, their financial resources were limited. They could not make their organisation strong and effective and did not possess the media of politics. No doubt, those Muslims who were members of the Congress had the backing of a powerful organisation with ample resources. But they had now lost intimate contact with nationalist Muslims outside the Congress that had earlier been maintained through Maulana Muhammed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari. Azad was now the only leader for whom all Nationalist Muslims to whatever political organisation they belonged had a sentiment of response and confidence; and it was generally believed that he alone could form a united nationalist Muslim front against the Muslim League. But his preoccupations within the Congress made it difficult for him to find time for anything in this regard. Besides his sensitivity and scholarly detachment made him shy of coming closer to the masses and assuming active leadership. The Nationalist Muslims could not thus organise and consolidate the scattered forces.

The Muslim League regarded the Nationalist Muslims as the real adversary. Soon after the 1937 elections the progressive group in the Muslim League had been swamped by reactionaries, that is by landlords and title-holders. These reactionaries now got an opportunity to settle old scores with Nationalist Muslims and they started on behalf of the League, a tremendous campaign of vilification and calumny in which they spared neither distinguished national leaders like Asaf Ali, Syed Mahmud, Khwaja Abdul Majeed and Maulana Azad nor revered religious leaders like Maulana Husain Ahmad and Mufti Kifayatullah. In July 1945, a prominent Ahrar leader said in a public speech at Shaikhupura :

> "The biggest battle is raging in the house of the Muslims themselves. Today, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani are being called dishonest traitors to Islam and mercenary agents of the Hindus. The Muslim League papers are writing inflammatory articles against them

even threatening them with murder."

Nor were these threats empty. Allah Bakhsh, the President of Azad Muslim Conference which supported the national demand for a united free India was murdered in Sind. Inspite of all this, nationalist Muslims within and without the Congress stood their ground. The conflict between them and the Communalists grew in intensity and bitterness. The League was becoming more powerful day-by-day.

One cannot ignore the ideological and material foundations of what is differently described as "Muslim Nationalism," "Muslim Communalism" and "Muslim Separatism" and the complex interplay of the force which sustained and provided depth to the demand for a separate homeland. Congress leaders like Nehru and his associates rightly held the view that the League was a politically reactionary organisation because of its alliance with the British and their allies in the landowning class; and that at no stage did it reflect the feelings and aspirations of the community it claimed to represent. One cannot also deny the predominance of the feudal-bourgeois elements and their narrow political interests. At the same time it will be incorrect to overlook the fact that despite its electoral reverses suffered in 1937, the League had vastly improved its political standing by acquiring considerable support. By the end of 1937, the UP alone had 90 branches with 100,000 new members. Between 1938 and the end of 1942, the Muslim League won 46 out of the 56 bye-elections held in various Muslim constituencies. The League had conquered the bulk of the middle classes as well as the lower middle classes. There was a dramatic change in favour of Muslim League and this helped it to refurbish its image. This was vindicated by the 1945-46 elections when it polled 75% of the Muslim votes and won 460 out of 563 seats. It is also significant to understand how the Muslim League got transformed into a viable and powerful body and why its slogan appealed to the many sections of the Muslims. Jinnah, a leader imbued with nationalist ideals, was at this time obsessed with the idea of partition without having done enough homework for it. An enquiry into these aspects may prove very useful in understanding the demand for India's partition.

The general lack of realism and foresight on the part of

Congress leadership, the intransigence of Jinnah and the British policy to woo and appease the Muslim League are significant landmarks. The Congress should have been more generous towards the Muslim League by taking into account their fears and aspirations—a view which was shared by Nationalist Muslims.

It will be pertinent to point out that two things stand out most significatly throughout the 1930s and 1940s—the period when Muslim separatist movement gathered real momentum. The failure of the Congress leadership to satisfy Muslim aspiration regarding the sharing of power and the use by the British of the resultant dissatisfaction among the Muslims to encourage them in moving further to the road of separatist politics. The change in the nature of Muslim politics cannot be described as an inevitable manifestation of a separate Muslim nationalism.

The sequel of 1937 elections proved damaging to the Congress-League relations; while the former had done reasonably well in the elections, the latter had made a poor show in it. This was the most important factor which influenced the attitude of the Congress towards the question of setting up Congress-League Ministries in UP and Bombay, the only two provinces where the League had acquired any appreciable strength in the Legislature. There is no documentary evidence to prove that there was a prior understanding between the two parties that coalition ministries would be formed after the elections. But the Congress had been unable to win even a single Muslim seat on its own ticket in UP and Bombay and at that time it would not have been difficult for it to find members amongst the Muslim League who were prepared to work whole-heartedly with the Congress. Khaliquzzaman broached the question of a coalition ministry in UP on his own initiative and in Bombay it was Jinnah who did the spade work. But the Congress was not prepared to accept the idea except on its own terms; and these included the dissolution of the Muslim League party in the legislature and an agreement on the part of the League not to set up candidates in the bye-elections on its own. This attitude on the part of the Congress marked a turning point in the Congress-League relationship. The impression got round that the Congress was trying to annihilate the League. Moreover, the Congress move to win over the Muslim masses by direct appeal to them created further alarm and misgivings among Muslim

leaders even outside the Muslim League. So much so that this brought other important leaders like Sikander Hayat Khan and Fazlul Huq of the Muslim majority provinces of the Punjab and Bengal respectively in the League's fold under the leadership of Jinnah.

Thus strengthened the Muslim League then retaliated by raising the slogan of Islam in danger and by its open opposition the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935. Undoubtedly, the League's charges against the Congress ministries of committing "atrocities" on Muslims were exaggerated but they were not totally unfounded. This it borne out by the remarks made in the letters of such Congress leaders as Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad and Syed Mahmud. The vocal section of the Muslims was never so bitter against the Congress as it was at this time.

Nehru maintained a self-complacent attitude for a long time. It is not that he was unaware of Muslim grievances and on an occasion when he needed Muslim support as in course of his effort to forge a united front with the Muslim League to persuade the government to declare its war aims and recognize India's independence, he confessed to Jinnah that the solution of the communal problem had been neglected by the Congress. The communal problem did not receive the top priority that demanded. There was no dearth of Congress leaders (Maulana Azad and Rajendra Prasad may particularly be mentioned here) who were troubled by widening gulf between the two communities and immediate action was required to be taken to resolve the communal dead-lock.

There is documentary evidence to show that Nationalism Muslims like Syed Mahmud, Zakir Hussain and Maulana Azad were critical of the Congress attitude towards the Muslims. Azad had always been keen to win over Jinnah. He had requested Prasad (in 1935) to take full advantage of the situation as he had found Jinnah in a conciliatory mood and considered him a person who could deliver the goods on behalf of the Muslims. He also desired that if joint election could he obtained by the Congress acceding to Muslim demands for reservation of seats, the Congress should not hesitate to go for it. He was conscious of the fact that the Communal Award had turned the scales in favour of the Muslims, but since the Congress had always attached great significance to

joint elections it should not fail to secure them. Jinnah had also given an assurance to Prasad that if the Communal problem was solved, the Muslims would be prepared to join in any national demand for struggle. Personally Prasad had no objections to be proposals put forward by him. Syed Mahmud who had been a very close friend of Nehru was drifting away from him so far as their approach to communal question was concerned. What was not palatable to Nehru was a remark made by Syed Mahmud in a letter where he said, "What is little understood and never learnt in India is facing facts." The immediate cause for resentment on the part of Syed Mahmud was the Nagpur Session of Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad held on 24 April 1936 where the Congress conceded that "Hindi or Hindustani" would be the national language. This had upset Syed Mahmud so much that he decided to retire from political life. While Azad also regretted that the question of the script should not have been taken up for discussion. Zakir Hussain pleaded to Rajendra Prasad to "grant the advocates of Urdu what they wanted, for in the interests of a united Indian people you can never give them too much." In a letter written on 15 August to Rajendra Prasad, Azad made a critical evaluation of the Congress policy on the communal question since 1928. He concluded that the Congress had delayed the solution of the Hindu-Muslim question. That was the main reason why it had taken such a complicated turn at that moment. His contention was that if we had settled the matter at that time (In 19.8 Jinnah was asking for reservation of seats in the Punjab and Bengal in case adult franchise was not established) the whole misunderstanding between Congress and Muslims would have disappeared for ever. But the Congress leaders failed to realise the seriousness of the growing ill-will among the Muslims on the language and other questions. Nehru had told Syed Mahmud that he was unable to get excited about the communal problem as it seemed to him an unreal affair. The common complaint of Muslims in all the Congress ruled provinces was that they were much worse off than when they were under the previous government. Pointing out the communal tendencies of the Congress regime in Central Province and Baror, the Pirpur Report maintained that the Central Province Congress Committee had issued instruction that while a Hindu could enlist himself as a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress at one and the same time no Muslim could

become a member both of the Muslim League and the Congress. This has also been corroborated by Azad. In a letter written to Rajendra Prasad he referred to the discriminatory action of the Congress and concluded that it was not only a complaint of the other groups but also of the Congress Muslims. If the latter could not have any connection with the Muslim League why was it tolerated that a member of the Hindu Mahasabha could simultaneously become a member of the Congress ? He requested him to remove the complaints of Muslims which had perturbed Muslim nationalists and implored him to take some immediate decisive action to remedy the situation. Syed Mahmud also criticised the working of the Congress ministries and asserted that "such belief was not the effect of propaganda alone." In a very frank letter to Nehru he wrote . . . "let me tell you in general terms again that the Congress has failed to properly and efficiently govern particularly in this province (Bihar) where it has definitely misgoverned." He also criticised the Congress ministers as being full of provincialism, caste prejudices and revivalism.

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GANDHI, AZAD AND NATIONALISM

MOIN SHAKIR

A Comparative study of Gandhi and Azad is interesting as well as rewarding to understand the later phase of Indian Nationalism which constituted the theoretical foundation of the movement for the independence of the country.

In the freedom struggle no two leaders represent such a great similarity as Gandhi and Azad. They were religious by temperament but wanted to reconcile their religion with reason and science Their orthodoxy which they inherited was in a way hostile to rationalism. After making a comparative study of religions, they arrived at the conclusion of the fundamental unity of all religions; for them religion was not a dogma but a living principle. They opposed the existence of the British raj but held that the independence of the country was a means for the social, cultural and the economic emancipation of the people. They were equally concerned with the communal harmony in the country. Their religion and politics never undermined the basis of humanism nor did it ignore the vital realities of the human situation.

It is also to be noted that while their ideas were rooted in the orthodox view of religion their commitment to the modern democratic values was sincere and real. They spoke in the idoms of Hinduism and Islam but they abhored religious politics and the establishment of religious state. They used religion for political puposes but never made politics subservient to religion,

Nationalism is the dominant feature of the political thinking of Gandhi and Azad. In order to understand their view of nationalism, a reference to the character of Indian nationalism is essential. Indian nationalism is of recent origin. It has been formulated by those who felt the needs of "revaluation of values" and the discovering of Indian identity *vis-a-vis* the British culture and civilization. It was a dialectical process as it included at once the revivalist and the reformist attitudes of the Indian mind.

Nationalism in India can, thus, be described as the consciousness and the recognition of the socio-cultural unity in the past. But it was more than a spiritual imperative because it has to operate as a device to letting out the aspirations and the hopes of the educated middle class. The positive contributions of the British raj and the work of the orientalists gave a fillip to it. The earlier nationalists were more concerned with the questions like the cultural back wardness of the people and the progress in the country.

The establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was a great land mark in the history of the growth of Indian nationalism. What went into its making was not only the urge for Indianizing the civil services but also the social and cultural movements of the early 19th century. Pattabhi Sitaramayya rightly says that the Congress was "the organ and exponent of a movement of national renaissance. For fifty years and more before the birth of the Congress, the leaven of national rejuvenation had been at work[1]."

The course of the evolution of the Congress was determined by the ideas and the ideals of its leaders. Its 'operative basis was, of course, nationalism. Its character remained liberal so long as its leaders professed the notion of the Providential connection of the British raj and the employment of the constitutional means and method.

This underwent a change when the leaders began to preach extremism. Both liberals and extremists made valueable contributions in strengthening the Congress and nationalism. They had their merits and demerits, successes and setbacks. But it should be noted that under the influence of the liberal and the extremist schools nationalism came to be understood as a political doctrine of progress. General democratic content was also provided. The aspects of socio-cultural unity was put on political

and economic aspects. But the socio-cultural aspect of the history was not discarded.

The outbreak of the First World War, the Indian contribution to the war efforts, the successful prosecution of the War by the Allies and the promises the British government made to the Indian people constrained the British government to change its approach to the Indian question. This necessitated a constructive response on the part of the Indian leaders. What was required was the blending of the two apparently contradictory principles of liberalism and extremism. A synthesis of these two trends is found in the view of nationalism advocated by Gandhi and Azad.

The development of Indian nationalism was not always coherent and consistent. The liberal nationalism was primarily secular. The confluence of religion and politics in extremist nationalism succeeded in broadening the base of the nationalist movement. Religion and nationalism became almost convertible terms in the speeches and the writings of the extremists. This is true of both Hindu extremism and Muslim extremism.

Although Gandhi and Azad were brought up in an orthodox atmosphere they refrained from joining the extremists. They were impressed by the extremists but were influenced by the liberals. This has been an enigma for many interpreters of Gandhi and Azad. Their nationalism can, therefore, be described as quasi-liberal and quasi-extremist.

Gandhi's attempt to formulate the theory of nationalism on the basis of certain liberal and extremist principles was deliberate. He was half-liberal, half-extremist. He surely succeeded in striking a new track. It is interesting to note that Gandhi described himself as the true disciple of Tilak but at the same time declared Gokhale as his political guru. What Gandhi borrowed from Tilak was "the love of country and the steady pursuit of Swaraj[2]." Besides, Gandhi was aware that "no one perhaps realized the evil of existing system of government as Tilak did."[3]

Thus, the notion of the withdrawal of the British and the awareness of the rotten nature of the allien bureaucracy in Gandhi's ideal of nationalism is the contribution of extremists. But unlike Tilak, Gandhi used religion "in a very subtle way" and his religion was quite free from sectarianism. Gandhi did not look upon Hinduism as a society. P. Spratt says that " . . .

Mr. Gandhi represents the bourgeois side of national movement, and Tilak the rural, medieval side[4]."

It is surprising that Gandhi does not speak of religious orientation of extremist nationalism that he accepted but claims to have derived the principle of spiritualization of politics from Gokhale. According to him, the message of Gokhale's life and teachings is to spiritualize the political life and the political institutions of the country. He also learnt from Gokhale that the means for bringing about change in the society should be pure, peaceful and legitimate. They should be based on religion. Without the spirit of religion the political movement would be barren.[5]

Gandhi's analysis of liberalism and extremism defies the popular superficial generalization. Azad's analysis also agreed with that of Gandhi's. Under the influence of the liberals (particularly Sir Syed) Azad came to realise that the British made a tremendous contribution to the Indian political system. In the field of culture their contribution was considerable. But he held that the British connection with India was not providential. Moreover the British rule was not everlasting. This was more the result of disillusionment with the liberal politics in India than any vigorous influence of extremism on Azad. He observed that the methods of "begging, petitions, waiting in deputation and so on could not be of much avail. We had to try to find some means of exerting direct pressure. But most people fought shy of this line of thinking[6]."

Unlike the liberals, he was not enthusiastic about the issue of social reforms. For broadening the base of the nationalist movement he did not join the ranks of the extremists. He was alive to the hard reality that militant nationalism would lead to religious obscurantism and mysticism in politics and weaken the secular character of the political movement.[7] Azad had come out of the shell of religiosity by abandoning romanticism. Azad, like Gandhi, was under similar compulsions of synthesising the liberal and the extremist doctrines.

Gandhi and Azad were neither atheists nor agnostics. They accepted the utility of religion for political purposes. The view of religion they upheld was not narrow and dogmatic it was not devoid of justice and equality. To Gandhi, religion "does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government

of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. The religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christanity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality." His Hinduism was not exclusive : "The Hinduism of my conception is no narrow creed. It is a grand evolutionary process as ancient as time, and embraces the teachings of Zoraoster, Moses, Christ, Mohammad, Nanak and other prophets that I could name."

Gandhi's religion was the religion of truth. He believed that men will be judged only by their actions and not according to the religions they profess. Azad's view of religion is strikingly similar to that of Gandhi : Azad's view of religion consists of unity of God and emphasis on right action. It means unity of man and his actions based upon the eternal truths laid down by all scriptures. The religious philosophy of Gandhi and Azad was rational. They regarded the reasoning faculty in man as the noblest of his faculties. Reasoning; the driving force which leads to an endless vista of progress. It does not clash with religion but draws strength and inspiration from faiths.

This rational view of religion and its incorporation in the scheme of nationalism is a departure from the liberal and the extremist nationalism. Nationalism of Gandhi and Azad is composed of three major ingredients : Swaraj, communal harmony and non-violence. Although Gandhi's philosophy is based on truth yet it is not mentioned as one of the elements of his nationalism because he himself said that active *ahimsa* necessarily includes truth and fearlessness and non-violence is imbedded in truth and *vice versa.* One thing more should be made clear. Azad regarded non-violence as a policy while to Gandhi it was a creed. But in the final analysis of the doctrine of non-violence all the differences between Gandhi and Azad disappear.

Under the influence of liberalism both Gandhi and Azad were not initially anti-British. Azad was definitely a supporter of the British government upto 1905. He admitted that in the entire history of the country, there had been no government which developed so much regard and respect for the liberties of the people, irrespective of their caste, creed and community. He also expressed his gratitude to the British Emperor for maintaining the independent existence of Islam and to the West for preserving Islamic Arabic literature. But the currents and cross currents

inside and outside the country turned him into an uncompromising anti-imperialist.

He also came to realize that Islam and territorial nationalism are not antagonistic. Political Pan-Islamism was nothing short of a misnomer. Therefore a realistic approach, according to Azad, called for the struggle of all people to destroy the vestiges of imperialism. Gandhi was also the supporter of the British government but he was dis-illusioned with the anti-people repressive policy of the British government. He also arrived at the same conclusion of destroying the fabric of imperialism through the united struggle of all the people.

According to Gandhi and Azad the basis of united struggle was "common political subjection." Its aim was freeing the people from the tyranny of the alien rule. Swaraj signified self-rule and self-restraint. The British government could not be just and moral because it was founded on exploitation of the masses. It had ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. Swaraj would not mean change of rulers but it would provide an opportunity for the establishment of justice, liberty and equality for one and all in the country. Justice and slavery could not co-exist. Swaraj would, therefore, ensure the regulation and control of authority of the people. It would be a "healthy and dignified independence."

The content of Azad's Swaraj was mainly political while Gandhi gave equal importance to social and cultural aspects. Gandhi thought that the constructive programme was a part and parcel of the scheme of Swaraj.[8] Azad did not ignore them. He thought that they are implied because in India "every kind of faith, every kind of culture, every mode of living was allowed to flourish and find its own salvation."

Gandhi and Azad did provide economic content to Swaraj. Economic independence meant to the economic upliftment of every individual by his own conscious effort. They thought that India need not imitate the western model. The roots of the concept of economic independence may be traced in India's religious traditions. They were perhaps aware of the strength of social conservatism. Gandhi, therefore, preferred to call his stateless society as Ram Raj which had nothing to do with Hindu Raj.

Gandhi stood for the welfare of all. His theory of trusteeship

is far from clear. It is subjected to severe criticism. It is relevant only in a static and stagnant society. This is in keeping with the Indian temperament. We are by instinct and tradition averse to revolutions. Traditionally we are slow-going people," said Lajpat Rai. But modern and rapidly changing society cannot be satisfied with scheme of trusteeship.[9]

Azad, on the other hand, began to consider socialism as a healthy system. He supported the progressive movement in politics and literature. He held that the modern economic system should not approve concentration of the means of production and wealth. Even private property may be abolished in the interest of the nation. It is a question of policy and is not at all concerned with religion.[10] To Azad, progressive democracy should control the economy of the nation without being bound by *laissez faire* philosophy. It should not rely on big business for solving the problems of the nation. In Britain and America no fund could prevent the property of the middle and the lower middle class. One can conclude that Gandhi and Azad aimed at the welfare of all but Gandhi enunciated the doctrine which is very much obscure and ambivalent while Azad is comparatively clear.

The second ingredient of Gandhi-Azad nationalism is communal harmony. According to them it amounts to the active participation of all the communities in the freedom struggle. It also means the unity of the people which should come through religion. What Gandhi and Azad desired was that the religious interests of every community should be well-safeguarded. Love and tolerance should be the basis of harmony. Every religion proclaims the truths of human brotherhood and discards communal and racial prejudices. The Muslim question was part of the ideal of communal harmony.

Gandhi and Azad subscribed to composite nationalism. They did not countenance nationalism based on religion especially in the Indian context of multiplicity as it would divide the people on artificial lines. So Swaraj and strong self-government is not possible without communal harmony, Gandhi and Azad stressed so much on harmony that they considered it dearer than the freedom of the country itself. Everything should be subordinated to the interests of unity.

Gandhi and Azad were in the forefront of the Khilafat movement. Although the Khilafat was primarily a religious

question yet they believed that it would be instrumental in bringing about the unity of the Indian people. It would be the unity of those who professed different religions but considered India their home. Besides, through it, the interests of Hinduism could be protected. And the nationalist movement would become nationalist in the true sense of the word.

Gandhi and Azad were of opinion that pan-Islam was not necessarily anti-Hindu or anti-India. The Khilafat movement must be supported because it was, in fact, the part of the struggle for the independence of the country. It was a popular anti-British movement which meant strengthening the forces of nationalism. It was a positive step towards the unity of the country. Thus, the support to the Khilafat movement by Gandhi and Azad was not a hasty or ill-considered decision. The extremists, like B.C. Pal, also supported the movement in order to save India from the danger of Christian influence.

The Khilafat movement failed to achieve the objects of communal harmony. The concept of unity advocated by Gandhi and Azad was impossible of realization through religion. The problem of communal harmony was more than religious. Gandhi recognized the political and economic dimensions of the problem particularly after 1930. He stated that the Hindu-Muslim question "centred round a division of political powerspoils of office." Or "the causes of the discord are economic and political and it is these that have to be removed." Azad's religious approach to the communal problem also underwent a change. He observed that necessary assurances for the economic future of the Muslims should be given; since the Hindu-Muslim question is economic in character it cannot be solved without taking the economic aspect into account. He wholeheartedly supported the Bengal Part of C.R. Das.

According to Gandhi and Azad, the partition of the country would be "harmful not only for India as a whole, but also for Muslims in particular, and in fact it creates more problems than solves." The cry of the tyranny of majority is fictitious. In future India there would be political majority and political minority. The majority would always be a "mixed majority." "The future constitution" according to Azad, "will be framed by the representatives; the Hindus and Muslims will have to think of their position and interests not as Hindu or Mussalman, but as a

a peasant or a zamindar, as a labourer or capitalist and so on." The constitution would ensure equality of opportunity and economic freedom. The country, therefore, need not be partitioned.[11]

Still the country was partitioned in 1947. The failure of Gandhi and Azad is evident. They failed to carry conviction even with their own colleagues. Acharya Kripalani says that Gandhi had not been able to show the way of combating communal strife by non-violence as he had done in the case of fighting the British." The approach of Gandhi and Azad may be lacking in clarity but what is relevant today is its secularism. Both advocated the separation of religion from politics. They also pleaded for making religion a personal affair of the individual. Moreover even after independence the problem of the minorities poses many difficulties. It should be handled more on political and economic plane than on cultural or religious plane.

Non-violence is the third ingredient of the nationalism of Gandhi and Azad. According to Gandhi, non-violence was the first and the last-article of faith. "My marriage to non-violence is such an absolute thing that I would rather commit suicide than be deflected from my position," said Gandhi. He thought non-violence would prevent a bloody revolution and anarchy in the country. It would lead to democracy and not to despotism. It is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than the brute force. It is not "the weapon of the weak" but "presupposes ability to strike." It is an active force free from weakness. It exercises a sane pressure of love and good-will.[12]

Azad's approach was not very much different. He held that Islam has a message of peace for the mankind. It does not sanction war. *Jehad* does not necessarily imply warfare but katharsis, quietness and patience. It aims at ending injutice, war and tyranny. He knew too well that the consequences of war are not only cruel but disasterous. It has adverse effects on morality. All the moral virtues lose their value and utility.

To Azad faith in Islam and love of freedom are synonymous. Taking in view the realities of the Indian situation Azad did not suggest hostility to the British, but drafted a plan of non-violent non-co-operation. It was characterized by the conviction of unity righteous action, patience, organization, and the spirit of sacrifice for the cause of freedom. There exists no difference with

Gandhi on this question. Interestingly although Gandhi is supposed to be the greatest exponent and the practitioner of non-co-operation, the idea did not originate with him. Azad had already come to understand the usefulness of such a programme. Tolstoy had also suggested such a programme in 1901. Hiren Mukherji says that Azad's role in the formulation of that policy was decisive.[13]

Unlike Gandhi, Azad described non-violence as policy and not as creed. He maintained that war is permissible to protect the freedom of religion and conscience. If tyranny can be eradicated by war, then war is justified. If the Indians have no alternative they have a right to take the sword. Azad held that Congress must place greater emphasis on the freedom of India than on non-violence as creed. On the issue of support to the British during the Second World War Azad said that Gandhi raised an irrelevant issue because Congress was not a pacifist organisation.

Gandhi thought that India should not favour the British even if the participation in the war meant the achievement of India's freedom. Gandhi was a convinced pacifist and the logic of facts could hardly persuade him to modify his position. He was opposed to Cripps proposals more on account of his aversion to war than his objections to the proposals as such.[14]

Azad's mind was not governed by such a consideration. On many questions, like settlement with the government on the issue of boycotting the Prince of Wales at Calcutta, holding of Round Table Conference and the support of the Japanese *vis-a-vis* the British during the 2nd World War, Azad openly expressed his disagreement with Gandhi. When the non-co-operation movement was called off, Azad and C.R. Das felt the need of an alternative programme.[15] That such an alternative programme could not be formulated may be attributed to the premature death of C.R. Das. Had such a programme been formulated Azad would have favoured it and challenged Gandhi's leadership. On the basis of such differences Azad could be described as a reluctant Gandhite.[16]

It is pointed out that with Gandhi non-violence was a creed. He termed violence as a brute force. But Azad thought that "opposing of violence with violence is fully in harmony with the natural laws of God is those circumstances under which Islam

permits violence." There are many inconsistencies in the Gandhian doctrine of non-violence. He (Gandhi) was aware that absolute non-violence is not possible so long as we exist physically. He also held that inevitable violence cannot be regarded as sin. It is not only permissible but even considered as meritorious. Such statements do introduce an element of contradiction in Gandhi's thinking. The inherent limitations of non-violence are also obvious. His view of goodness of human nature is nothing but pious thinking. He does not take into consideration that "the better side of human nature flourishes on the necessary scale only in favourable conditions." In 1947 he felt that there was some vital defect in his technique and working of non-violence.[17] Gandhi's notion of non-violence is so flexible that violence and non-violence become convertible terms. Here again there is a point of agreement between Gandhi and Azad.

The doctrine of non-violence has been severely criticised. But what is ignored in such criticism is the progressive content of the ideology of Gandhi and Azad. Non-violence provided an effective strategy for the struggle for freedom. In that sense it was a progressive force. It could mobilise the millions who saw in it their political, economic and social emancipation. It turned the movement into the struggle of the people of all classes. Philosophically speaking it may be faulty but from the point of view of Swaraj it contributed towards the enrichment of Indian nationalism.

The nationalism of Gandhi and Azad was different from that of the extremists and the liberals. It was not only based on the interests of the people but also on wider knowledge of human affairs. Their nationalism was never chauvinistic or irrational. It was democratic and progressive. It was not a borrowed dogma but was rooted in patriotism. They made it absolutely clear that their fight is against the oppressive bureaucracy and not against the British people. "Hatred is not essential for nationalism. Race hatred will kill the real national spirit . . . we want freedom of our own country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other communities . . . a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world[18]," said Gandhi.

To Azad, narrow-mindedness was a "disease." Parochial nationalism, according to him, would be a hindrance to world unity and peace.[19] Thus, internationalism with out nationalism is

not possible. Nationalism wants to organise itself or find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large. In this way nationalism is an attempt at the realization of the brotherhood or identity with the human life.

Indian nationalism is composed of various stands but the contribution of Gandhi and Azad is of profound significance. They played unique role in the national awakening of the people.

The criticism that they possessed a medieval mind is wrong. Much better understanding of Gandhi and Azad is possible if their ideas are assessed against the background of the conflict of old and new (in India), East and West, culture and science and the effects of the industrial civilization. In the post-independence era also one finds that the nationalism of Gandhi and Azad is useful as the basis of the efforts of reconstruction of society. It will be a guiding force for the social transformation, achievement of economic independence and the establishment of a secular set up in the country.

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7. A.R. Desai, Social background of Indian Nationalism, p. 293.
8. Tendulkar, Mahatma, Vol. IV, pp. 224-25.
9. Cf. R.P. Dutt, India Today and Tomorrow, p. 137.
10. Azad, Malfuzat-i-Azad, p. 99.
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13. Hiren Mukerji, India Struggles for Freedom, p. 126.
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15. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD— AN ASSESSMENT*

KHALIQ AHMAD NIZAMI

Addressing a meeting on the death anniversary of Mr. C.R. Das, Maulana Azad quoted Victor Hugo's remarks about Voltaire :

> "No matter how towering a personality and how brilliant its records of achievements, history has to wait for his death before it can pronounce its verdict about him."

And then said :

> "If it is true, the hold back period for the Indian historian is over."

Today we can repeat the same words of the Maulana about his ownself. Historical assessment of his role in the political and intellectual life of the country is possible only now. As one surveys the political landscape of India during the last hundred years or so, the personality of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stands out as representing the ethos of the Indian nation. He was a living symbol of ideals which he cherished throughout his life. Humanism as the ideal of human relationship; secularism as the basis of political activity; tolerance and cosmopolitanism as the

*Text of the Key note Address delivered at the Iran Society, at the Inaugural Session of Maulana Azad Birth Centenary Celebration on 26th Nov., 1988.

quintessence of religion; intellectual emancipation as the kernel of all academic pursuits; dedication to the cause of the common people and impeccable honesty in public life. To tell his life story is to see these principles in action.

From the day that he entered public life to his last moment. Maulana Azad stood like a rock upholding these ideals sincerely and tenaciously. Unity of India and the solidarity of the Indian nation were the watchwords of his political career. In fact, faith in national unity supplied the motive power to his political activity. He began his political career by opposing the Partition of Bengal and ended it by opposing the Partition of the country. He never budged an inch from his ideals and never wavered from his path. He could say with Ghalib :

> "The heavens rotate for years before one like me with a burnt heart appears in a family of fire brands."

POLITICAL ROLE

Born in the holy city of Mecca. Abul Kalam Azad was brought up and educated in Calcutta, a city in the vanguard of India's political struggle. It was not only the centre of revolutionary politics, but also the hub of intellectual activity. Here his thought was nurtured and his personality was moulded in consonance with the progressive spirit of the age. Early in his life he acquainted himself with Sir Syed's socio-religious movement to extricate Muslim mind from the meshes of medievalism, inertia and obscurantism; but, disowing his pro-British politics, identified himself with the revolutionaries of Bengal. It was an unique combination : Sir Syed's modernism wedded to Bengal's revolutionary politics. If *Tahzib-u'l-Akhlaq* impressed on his mind the need of social reform and intellectual quest, Shri Arabindo Ghosh's *Karmayogin* became for him a symbol of national awakening and revolt. He came into contact with Shri Shyam Sunder Chakravarty and jumped headlong into revolutionary politics with Faizi's verse on his lips :

> "Flame gushes out of our heart which is broken into hundred fragments; Today the fume of fire burns in our fountain (heart)."

He soon found a place in the inner chambers and the secret parleys of the revolutionaries. Paying tribute to his dedicated political life. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan said, "Even before he joined the Congress in 1920, he was a revolutionary." The role of his *al-Hilal* (1912-14) in the political awakening of the country cannot be exaggerated. His editorials were not merely incisive and unflinching, but were traced in characters of fire. In January 1922, he thus reviewed the role of *al-Hilal* :

> "The spirit that Mahatma Gandhi is today infusing in the religious life of the Hindus, *al-Hilal* finished this job in 1914. This is a strange coincidence that new life and energy was generated in Muslims and Hindus when both turned to movements of religious education in place of wes ern culture."

For many years his mind was engrossed in planning for a violent revolution. His visit to Egypt, Iraq, Iran and Turkey, where revolutionaries were actively organising liberation movements, further fired his revolutionary zeal. His organisation, *Hizb-ullah*, which he founded sometime later, resembled the Italian Carbonari, though with a religious facade. Maulana Abdur Razzaq Malihabadi's disclosure that at one time he had carried arms and ammunitions on his behalf for his revolutionary followers brings to light an aspect of his political activity which was not so well appreciated earlier. Raja Mahendra Pratap has informed us that when he was organizing his revolutionary movement in Kabul, Maulana Azad used to keep contact with him. Maulana Obeidullah Sindhi, another revolutionary, was also in his confidence. In fact, Maulana Azad's involvement in revolutionary politics from Calcutta to Kabul is too significant to be treated lightly. He entered the Indian National Congress not as a political amateur but as an experienced and determined revolutionary. Had he not come under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, he would have ended his life as a martyr revolutionary. One who cried out in agnoy :

> "Where can I got the trumpet whose clarion call may awaken forty crore hearts from their deep slumber ?"

could hardly escape this fate; but when he was drawn to the

political fold of Mahatma Gandhi, he abjured violent revolutionary methods. But he accepted Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence not as a permanent principle of political struggle, but as a matter of transient policy. The Italian freedom movement had so enchanted his young mind that when he stood in the dock facing the charge of sedition he quoted leaders of the Italian and Irish freedom struggle and said : "Give me without least hesitation the maximum punishment that you can. I assure you that while writing your judgment the movement of your pen will be greater than the reaction of my heart on hearing the sentence of punishment." Six times in his life he had to be behind the bars. Ten years and seven months of his life were thus spent in the prison, but instead of depressing his spirits, it made him declare :

> "The engaged bird does not cry for freedom. It is sorrowful for the period it has spent outside the cage."

The Maulana was one of the triumvirate of the Indian National Congress—Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Azad. Twice he was President of the Congress—in 1923 and in 1940. Supporting his nomination as Congress President on February, 27 1940, Pandit Nehru said :

> "Never before has India had to face more difficult problems, in the national and international fields, than today. We welcome him therefore as a brave and trained captain of our force."

He was at the helm of affairs when delicate negotiations were conducted with the British government. His role as a negotiator received tribute from Lord Pethick Lawrence and others. Alert of mind, sincere of heart, with a clear vision of objectives and ideals, he proved an excellent negotiator and a statesman *par excellence*. It was difficult to outwit him; it was impossible to allure him. It was perhaps in view of his remarkable grip over the details and unflinching dedication to his ideals that Lord Mountbatten advised Pandit Nehru against his inclusion in the Cabinet.

Maulana Azad's political behaviour was rooted in his faith in the unity of the Indian nation. As a leader of the freedom struggle he stood against all communal forces in the country. To

him India was one, and all Indians constituted a single nation. Very early in life he had declared that if an angel gave him option between immediate freedom and national unity, he would prefer the latter and defer the attainment of freedom. In Indian disunity he read a disaster for humanity as a whole. In 1946-47 when negotiations for political settlement were being conducted he was prepared to accept some delay in the attainment of freedom if it helped to maintain the unity of the Indian nation. To the last moment he opposed the partition of the country. When the Cabinet of Independent India was being sworn in, he was the only figure in the gathering. Mosley wrote :

> "...and only the sad, sad face of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, to whom this occasion was something of a tragedy, sticking out from the sea of happy faces, like a gaunt and ravaged rock." (*The Last Days of British Raj*).

His disillusionment with the Muslim community found expression in his speech at the Delhi Jama Masjid in 1948, and his disappointment with his colleagues on this count is evident from *India Wins Freedom.*

His heart seemed to bleed when he said in his mosque speech in 1948 :

> "To speak the truth I am a fossil or a far off cry.
> I have passed my days as an exile in my own home."

There was agony, distress and disillusionment in these words. Future historians will have to analyse the sources of pathos and anguish which lie behind these words.

As an Intellectual

Maulana Azad's place as an intellectual is unrivalled contemporary history. His interests were varied and his education was vast. "I would unhesitatingly give Maulana Abul Kalam Azad", remarked Agha Saeed Naficy, "a high rank among the great scholars of the world. It is my feeling that few have been his equal and perhaps none his superior." He considered him the most learned man in the Islamic world. Pandit Nehru placed him in the category of the French Encyclopaedists. Oriental learning was his special domain but he was fully conversant with trends in

Western thought and voraciously studied books in English and French. According to C. Rajagopalachari : "It was not generally known that he was a great reader of heavy English books." According to Pandit Nehru he had Plato and Aristotle on his figure tips.

Religion, Philosophy and History were the special fields of his study. He could portray with minute details the special characteristics of many world civilizations, assess their contribution to world thought and evalute the factors responsible for their decline. His fearless exposition of his views in *al-Hilal* and *al-Balagh* initiated a new phase in the history of Indian journalism. Shri J.B. Kripalani says : "Those were the great days of Indian journalism—the days of Tilak, Bipin Pal and Aurobindo and a host of other writers. Maulana's journalistic contribution ranked among the best." His deep and intimate knowledge of the *Qur'an* was the sheet anchor of his personality and he interpreted religion in terms of humanism, compassion and benevolence. His *weltanschaung* rose above all barriers—ideological, linguistic, social and cultic.

Maulana Azad's international approach had its roots in his global perspective of knowledge. He considered the "cult of narrow nationalism" a serious obstruction in the development of international understanding and communication of ideas. His criticism of the parochial spirit of nationalism reminds one of Tagore's views on the subject.

"It is only through a re-education", he once remarked, "that we can create that sense of psychological unity and common citizenship which the technological unity achieved by the advance of modern science, requires of man." He advised Indians to develop a cosmopolitan approach and rise above petty prejudices. He was anxious to borrow from others what was best with them. While establishing the Sahitya Akademi he had the model of 'the world famous French Academy' before him. He used to say that India "freely partook of whatever lessons the world had to teach and equally freely gave the world her best." He looked even at the growth of Indian languages from the international point of view and pointed out at the First All India Conference on Letters that only Bengali and Urdu among modern Indian languages can claim to some extent international recognition. He considered Tagore's name among the immortals. "There is perhaps no language today," he said, "which has not translated some of the

works of Tagore." He wanted Indian languages to produce high quality literature so that they were able to win international recognition. While formally inaugurating the Visva-Bharati as a Central University on September 22, 1951, he lauded the efforts of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore who had "provided a meeting place for the culture of the East and the West." His appraisal of many Indian institutions was global in perspective. He considered pantheistic ideas to be the contribution of Upanishads to world thought, he considered Indian contribution to music greater and superior to the Greeks. "The breadth and depth of Indian music," he remarked, "is perhaps unrivalled as it is integration of vocal and instrumental music." In music also he discovered elements of international identity and interest.

He suggested the preparation of philosophy books from the Indian point of view, highlighting the role of India to the philosophic thought of the world.

As Religious Thinker

Maulana Azad was a rationalist insofar as he did not believe in blind adherence to inherited faith, but he believed that men needed the support of religious faith to survive on this planet.

In the account of his intellectual journey one finds something of Ghazzali's experience as depicted in *al Manqazmin al-Zulal*. His rationalism was, in fact, a stage in the evolution of his religious thought. He believed in (Contemplation) and not in (ratio-cination). Having covered all the stages of scepticism, doubt, agnosticism, atheism etc., he c .me back to his original faith, but it was now his own discovery and not an inherited legacy.

Maulana Azad may be said to have laid the foundation of a new *ilm-i-kalam*. His was an approach characterized by rejection of hair-splitting and casuistical philosophic disputations and artificially in exigetical studies and dogmatic exclusivism in theological approach. He believed in direct, unsophisticated approach to religion which he interpreted in terms of humanism, benevolence, charity and unity of human origin. His discussion of the divine attribute of (benevolence) is extremely fascinating and forms the basis of his approach to religion. It was Sir Syed who included in him the spirit of rational interpretation of religion, but later on, when writing his *Tarjuman-u'l-Quran*, he gave up that approach and said that any attempt to prove that religion is in harmony with the theories of science is basically wrong. Scientific

theories change every day while the values and varieties of religion cannot be altered every now and then to conform to the concepts of science. "The domains of religion and science," remarked the Maulana, "are different and should remain so."

As a religious scholar there were many dynamic and progressive elements in his thought. He interpreted religion in terms of human service and rejected all exclusivism and rigidity which created barriers in human society. He believed in a continuous, unending process of *ijtihad*, interpretation according to the needs of the time. To those who complained that he was leaving behind the ulama, he replied in Faizi's words :

> "It is not that I am leaving my companions behind. What can I do with those who have boils in their feet and cannot keep pace with the fast moving carvan."

It his *khutbas* which he used to deliver on every Friday in Calcutta, he spoke on problems relevant to the contemporary Muslim society. In a number of articles which originally appeared in *al-Hilal* and *al-Balagh*, but were later published in the form of brochures and widely circulated, he brought out the moral significance of religious practices in Islam. As when he was critical of the antiquated and out-of-date syllabus of the *madrasahs* and suggested total overhauling of the structure of Muslim education. In the religious thought of Maulana Azad one finds an echo of utilitarian, unitarian and humanitarian movements of Europe.

The Education Minister

If Maulana Azad's watchword in pre-Independence days was unity of the Indian nation and communal harmony, his main concern after 1947 was to inculcate the true spirit of secularism, to broaden the horizon of his fellow citizens and to involve them in the stupendous task of national reconstruction. As Education Minister he laid the foundation of the educational system of free India. His educational conspectus did not ignore even the schools and the villages. He drew the Indian scientific talent to fundamental research and studied the country with laboratories and institutions. His keenness to develop letters and fine arts led him to establish the *Sahitya Akademi*, the *Lalit Kala Academy* and the

Sangeet Akademi. Anxious to preserve the cultural heritage of India, he infused new life in Indian museums and made them repositories of Indian cultural traditions and relics. By establishing the University Grants Commission he gave a new forward pull to University education in India. He often cited Disraeli's remark that democracy is not possible without education. While announcing his 12 point programme of social education—particularly in villages—he declared that :

> "It is the birth right of every individual to receive at least the basic education without which he cannot fully discharge his duties as a citizen."

He appointed Commissions to go into the problems of education at every level : Primary, Secondary and University. To involve the youth in purposeful social activity, he started Youth Festivals and gave personal attention to organization of sports. He spoke fervently about the new techniques of mass education and suggested the use of broadcasting and film as instruments to fight ignorance and inertia. He prepared a whole scheme of social education with the object of inculcating civic consciousness and producing social solidarity among the Indians. Equally concerned about the uplift of the Indian womenfolk, he said :

> "all our educational programme will ultimately depend upon the proper education of women."

Appreciating the importance of agriculture in any curriculum of national education, he said : "Our general education, specially in the earlier stages, must therefore give a greater importance to the theory and practice of agriculture." In his programme of national uplift he gave pivotal position to the schools and remarked : "Schools are the laboratories which produce the future citizens of a state. The quality of the State therefore depends upon the quality of such laboratories."

Maulana was extremely concerned about the deteriorating standards of education and the status of teachers in India. He said emphatically :

> "Any programme for reconstruction of education must

place in the forefront the task of improving the status and condition of teachers."

He felt that "until University teachers are recognized for their standard of scholarship and character, they cannot offer to the students the leadership which we expect from them." He established the Central Institute of Education in order to evolve effective methods for the training of teachers, liquidation of adult illiteracy and review of the examination system. He advised that efforts should be made "to release the creative instincts in a child," because no education was complete which did not pay proper attention to the devevelopment and refinement of emotions. In his opinion one of the unfortunate results of the Industrial Revolution and the development of the capitalist system of production has been the divorce between art and craft. He wanted to ensure that emphasis on the education of science and technology did not lead to the neglect of the humanities.

Addressing the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO, he said :

> "No eastern concept of culture is complete unless if includes the values of the spirit."

One is surprised to find how vast was the horizon of Maulana's educational ideals and how deeply concerned he was to raise the intellectual status of his country. He viewed every educational problem in the light of India's needs but with international standards in mind.

The Maulana disdained intellectual or cultural isolation. He was keen to develop cultural contacts with the outside world on a large scale. He established the Indian Council for Cultural Relations with this aim in view.

Significantly the Maulana wanted the cultural and educational institutions to function in an atmosphere of complete freedom. Inaugurating the first All India Conference on Letters he said :

> "Literature and culture can flourish best in an atmosphere free from the restrictive influences of officialdom."

Maulana and Iranian History and Culture

It will not be inappropriate to refer here to Maulana Azad's foundness for the Persian literature and his deep understanding of the Iranian Culture. The martix of his thought was woven by threads taken from the Arab Classical traditions and the ideologies of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Ibn Taimiya and others; but his emotional life had received its hue and colour from the classical Persian poetry. His insight in Persian metaphysics and his intimate knowledge of Iranian Cultural traditions gave an unique intellectual flavour to his discussions. He wrote in prose but thought in poetry. Verses of Rumi, Hafiz, Faizi, Urfi, Kalim, Bedil and others rushed to his mind when he talked on any subject. His Urdu style also was deeply saturated with Persian idioms and Persian ideas. Saeed Naficy was taken by surprise when he heard him recite poem after poem from the *Masnavi.* Sometimes his whole thought would centre round a single Persian verse and he would develop his whole discussion round it. In his introduction to Dr. S. Radhakrishna's work on Philosophy he pointed out the helplessness of philosophic thought in guiding the ontological quest of man. The Maulana had a deep and lingering feeling, which persisted throughout his whole life, that he was a misfit in that age. He felt as an English poet has said :

Wandering between two worlds,
One dead the other powerless to be born.

He thought that he was an anachronism and the times could not take full advantage of his talent.

According to Maulana Azad the glorious period of Persian poetry ended not with Ghalib but with Shibli whose fine poetic sensibility he deeply admired.

Though Maulana Azad's poetic interests centred mainly round the Persian poetry but he had read English poetry also with great interest. He admired Byron, Wordsworth and Shelley. In one of his letters in *Ghubar-i-Khatir* which gives the details of his encounter with birds in the prison, one cannot help being remained of Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon.* When Maulana returned from the prison and his wife was dead, he referred to Wordsworth's line ;

But she's in her grave, and oh
The difference to me.

No long elegy could have given such pathetic expression to his feelings of loneliness and desolation.

Thirty Pages of 'India Wins Freedom'

The controversies associated with the thirty recently released pages of his *India Wins Freedom* may also be briefly referred to here. There were speculations of all sorts before these pages were published and there have been strange institutions and interpretations after their publication. Some people consider his account 'pedantic' and 'childish': others doubt his integrity and intentions. Some read malice and distortion in his statements. Some feel so offended by certain remarks that they are inclined to brush aside his political career—which is second to none—as of no significance. This spate of criticism is as shocking as unreal. What is unfortunately lacking is the will to see things in their proper perspective. Failure to understand some statements should not lead to aspersions on one whose life is an 'open book.' One is reminded on this occasion of Mr. U.N. Dhebar's words : "Maulana Azad was an open book for anybody to read. His eyes, the characteristic waving of his hand, in fact his whole being spoke simultaneously. You could see behind every word that he uttered the faith and conviction of the great personality." Firstly, these pages do not contain anything new, they simply elaborate what has been said earlier briefly but candidly. Secondly, the content of these pages can be assessed in the proper context alone. Unfortunately, we very often view differences of opinion as acrimonious clash of ideals or as a confrontation between persons belonging to opposite camps. Far from that. It should never be forgotten that Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad belonged to that category of men who do not hesitate to express their opinion, no matter who was involved. To say that they had differences of opinion is merely to affirm that they were human; that they express their differences openly shows that they were not hypocritical. Maulana Azad did not hesitate to express his differences with his father on religious and theological matters, he did not spare the greatest scholar—saint of Delhi—Shah Abdul Aziz—at the feet of whose descendants the elders of his family had learnt; he did not hesitate to comment

on Maulana Shibli who was his mentor in several respects; he criticised Sir Syed who had determined the direction of his intellectual life and social attitudes. And yet every one of these eminent figures was held in deep respect by him. Dr. S. Radhakrishna has rightly observed about him : "Among the great qualities of leadership he had, was this that he never shrank from expressing his views for fear of losing his popularity." Likewise Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had profound respect for Mahatma Gandhi, but he did not hesitate to remark about him in his prison Diary :

> "With all his very great qualities, he (Gandhiji has proved a poor and weak leader, uncertain and changing his mind frequently. How many times he has changed during these last four years since the war began ? It is very very sad, this deterioration of a very great man. The greatness remains in many ways, but the sagacity and intuitive doing of right thing are no longer in evidence."

One would be absolutely wrong and mistaken if these observations lead one to the conclusion that no love was lost between Gandhiji and Nehru. Similarly when Maulana Azad comments about certain actions of Pandit Nehru, he questions the wisdom not the intention or the integrity of Pandit Nehru. He dedicates his book to him.—'friend and comrade'—and speaks of his role in Indian freedom struggle in glowing terms. But Maulana's feelings also deserve realistic appraisal. His whole life had been spent in inculcating the spirit of national unity and solidarity. From the time of the Partition of Bengal he had opposed all separatist trends and tendencies. One should understand his agony when he found the idea of Partition being accepted by his friends and colleagues with whom he had struggled for the emancipation of the country.

Maulana Azad says that it was the extremely annoying attitude of Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, Finance Minister in the Interim Government, which made Sardar Patel and others think in terms of Partition in order to get out the baffling situation. Mr. Jinnah's attitude had similarly deeply heart Pandit Nehru. As early as 1943, Pandit Nehru had written in his *Diary* :

> "With all his cleverness and ability, he (Jinnah) produces an impression on me of utter ignorance and lack of understanding. . . What a tangle Logic and reason and goodwill are of little use when dealing with persons who possess none of these attributes. *Instinctively I think that it is better to have Pakistan or almost anything if only to keep Jinnah for away and not allow his muddled and arrogant head from interfering continually in India's progress.*"

Pandit Nehru was anxious to get rid of Mr. Jinnah any how and any cost; Maulana Azad was anxious to preserve national unity any how and at any cost. He was even prepared to delay the attainment of freedom if it could save the unity of the country and avoid partition. Both were correct and honest and despite different approaches to the problem wished well of the country. When the typescript of *India Wins Freedom* was shown to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by Professor Humayun Kabir and his opinion was sought about its publication, Pandit Nehru said : "If Maulana wanted it to be published, it should be published." Reacting to the comments made about him in the book, Nehru revealed the nobility of his soul. "Maulana laid greater emphasis on individuals and did not appreciate the pressure of circumstances and the compulsion of forces then operating." These remarks reveal the magnanimity and uprightness of Nehru's character and are the most perceptive comment on Maulana's analysis of the developments that had taken place during those years. Approached from this angle these thirty pages assume an entirely different complexion.

Some critics have said that if Maulana felt so strongly against the partition as one finds in his *India Wins Freedom,* why did he not lead the movement against it ? Only lack of vision can create such a doubt in one's mind. The Maulana had already alienated his own community during the preceding decades, his entering the field as opposing Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru—with whom he had fought the battle of freedom shoulder to shoulder—would have been a cry in the wilderness and a futile venture. He argued, debated, persuaded and tried to convince his colleagues. But ultimately submitted to the majority decision in the true spirit of a democrat. Maulana Azad's attitude and reaction in such situations has been very well noted by Pandit Nehru in his Prison Diary :

"Having taken a step deliberately, he is fully prepared to accept all consequences that flow from it, without murmur or complaint, even though that step was in some ways, against his own judgment. Later happenings have justified him. Every criticism that he made during our long deliberations from May to August last (1942) is now seen to have been correct. Yet he never points out or even refers to it."

It was not Maulana's way to create indiscipline in the party. He always accepted majority decision however unsavoury it might be to him. All throughout association with the Congress he had patched up differences of various factions. When he was first elected President of the Indian National Congress the main problem was to maintain the unity of the party; in 1940 when he assumed charge of the office a second time the problem was to maintain the unity of the country. On both the occasions he rose up to the occasion. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has praised his capacity to reconcile conflicting viewpoints and bringing about amity in the midst of diversity.

Curiously enough some scholars have doubted the authenticity of *India Wins Freedom*. This is another way of not considering Maulana's views. Humayun Kabir's integrity and loyalty to the Maulana cannot be doubted. The Maulana, as all those who had come into contact with him know, had a good understanding of English and could point out where any word did not reflect his views clearly or accurately. Some people have not merely personal knowledge of the work but were involved in its preparation in one way or the other. Maulana's Secretary Mr. Masood, knew about this work when the Maulana was dictating it to Humayun Kabir. Dr. P.N. Chopra collected some material for the Maulana and as reward got a cheque of Rs. 50 from him. What cannot be ignored is the fact that the narrative bears an indelible stamp of Maulana's style of presentation, analysis of situation and argumentation. If the fact is kept in mind that it is the inside story of a political family and that the sincerity of persons involved in the political drama was beyond doubt, things will assume entirely different complexion and analysis of political factors lying behind these accounts will become easier. So far as the Maulana is concerned, his place in the history of India's struggle for freedom, and his intellectual eminence remain unaffected by such

criticisms. His name will neither live nor die by such assessments. His life is an open declaration.

Pandit G.B. Pant was right when he told the Rajya Sabha : "The history of India for the last many years would, to a large extent, represent the part played by Maulana Sahib in the making of that history."

Two Outstanding Features of his Personality

Viewed as a person the most outstanding feature of Maulana's personality was its aesthetic sensivity which was both delicate and vibrant. Like Keats he believed that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

The twitter of a bird could move his whole being to tears; he could talk to the minarets of Taj in ecstacy; his soul went into raptures on hearing a melodious song; he could see in the smiling buds an urge to fly; he was made of the stuff poets are made of. He used to say that in matters of beauty and art no patriotic sentiment should stand.

The other important feature of his personality was his introvert nature. He developed his seclusion-preferring habits sedulously but it never cut him off from the emergizing currents of social life. He was egotistic in literary approach but not ego-centric in social relationship. In fact, he had the temperament of a scholar who longed for quiet contemplative life and felt that the real pleasure of life lay in decorating and enjoying the world of thought but the force of circumstances threw him into the vortex of public life.

It was like keeping fire and wool at the same place, he said. He attempted in his life a combination of Epicurean and Stoic attitudes. He believed that sublimation of feelings from the common mundane level can give man satisfaction even without worldly comforts. He practised it for many years in his life. Abject poverty and extremely straitened circumstances could not shake the equanimity of his soul. He regulated his time and routine by seconds, and as Pandit Nehru used to say : "he lived in a disciplined rut."

Despite all his aloofness, there was chrismatic charm in his personality. In his early youth he had an extremely charming and magnetic personality. Prof. Louis Massignon told me that when he met the Maulana at the residence of Shaikh

Alusi in Baghdad in 1908 he felt particularly attracted by his charming features. In his old age the Maulana had, as Saeed Naficy says : "A face chiselled by suffering, with embossed cheeks and fine lines." Indeed his wrinkled brow revealed the story of a revolutionary who felt forlorn and lonely after long and strenuous struggle in every field of life.

Maulana Azad is, no doubt, as the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has said, one of the immortals of Indian history. Paying tributes to him Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had told the Parliament :

> "We have had great men and we will have great men, but I do submit that peculiar and special type of greatness that Maulana Azad represented is not likely to be reproduced in India or anywhere else."

Firm faith in the unity of the Indian nation, deep humanism, relentless pursuit of truth, total dedication to the cause of national reconstruction and development and genuine secularism characterized his thought and activities throughout his life. He represented in his person the genius of an Encyclopaedist, the fire of a revolutionary, the vision of a philosopher, the aesthetic sensitivity of a poet and :

> *His life was gentle, and the elements*
> *So mixed in him that Nature might stand up*
> *And say to the world* : "*This was a man*",

His message will remain echoing down the corridors of time.

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MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD IS DEAD : LONG LIVE MAULANA AZAD

HIRA LALL CHOPRA

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Union Minister for Education and Scientific Resources died at New Delhi at his residence, 4, King Edward Road at 2-15 A.M. on Saturday, the 22nd February, 1958. He was lying critically ill since 19th morning when he had a paralytic stroke. After a day and a night of anxiety and despair, there was slight improvement in his condition on the 21st February, but it turned out to be only the last flicker of the flame. After the setback, life went on lingering—for hours on end—and some times for hours even the pulse beat was absent, but he continued to live, baffling all medical theries.

Besides Dr. B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, who was specially sent for by the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to attend upon the late Maulana, the following doctors were also in attendance : Dr. M.S. Rau; Dr. Ganguly; Lt. Col. S.S. Maitra; Dr. S.K. Sen; Dr. A.N. Bedi; Dr. R.K. Seth; Dr. Bhattacharjee and Dr. Kajla. In addition, the Defence Minister, Sri Krishna Menon had placed at the disposal of the team, all facilities from the Army Medical Services.

Those at his bedside included Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, the Premier of Kashmir, Mr. Humayun Kabir, a Central Minister and a life-long worker with the Maulana, Mr. Mohd. Yunus, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali and Maulana Azad's nephew, Mr. Nuruddin

The Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on hearing the

sad news rushed to Maulana's residence and was followed by Dr. K.L. Shrimali, Minister attached to the Education Ministry and the Defence Minister, Mr. Krishna Menon. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of India, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant and Dr. Sampurnanand, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh came immediately after and the residence started getting filled. Mr. Nehru and Dr. Radhakrishnan virtually broke into tears on entering the house and Pandit Pant was overwhelmed.

Six hours before his death when a doctor informed him that Mr. Nehru was there by his side. Maulana Azad opened his eyes and said "Khuda Hafiz" (Farewell). At one time when a doctor was administering an injection, Maulana Azad told him, "Please leave me to God." On the morning of the 21st February, his condition showed slight improvement but it deteriorated to an alarming extent in the evening and in the midnight the attending physician pronounced it as "very very bad."

The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Vice-President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his other Cabinet colleagues, and Mr. Dhebar, the President of the Indian National Congress spent an anxious day and night.

Visitors began streaming into the spacious grounds of Maulana Azad's residence as soon as the news of his death spread in the city. The body was brought out at about 7-30 A.M and placed on a raised dais in the portico. Long lines of people including Ministers, members of the Diplomatic Corps and Members of Parliament filed past the body as it lay in State covered with wreaths and flowers. Women in veils broke into sobs as they approached the dais to pay their respects to the departed leader. Several Muslims while awaiting their turn to file past, recited passages from the Quran.

The President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad who had called at 6 A.M. and paid a floral tribute to Maulana Azad, came again an hour before the funeral procession started and laid a wreath on the body. On behalf of State Governors, two wreaths were placed by the Military Secretary to the President.

Among those who paid their homage to the departed leader at his residence were Acharya J.B. Kripalani, Mr. Ajoy Ghosh, Mr. S. A. Dange and Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, leaders of opposition parties in both houses of Parliament. Besides them, Mr. A.K. Gopalan, Mr. P.U.G. Raju and Maharaja Pratap Kesri Deo also paid their

homage at the residence.

As the hour for the start of the funeral procession drew near, the over-swelling crowed of people wishing to pay homage to Maulana Azad became uncontrollable and Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru posted himself at the entrance and called on them to be more disciplined.

President Rajendra Prasad was informed of Maulana Azad's death within almost a minute of the end by the President's surgeon, who was one of the doctors attending on the Maulana. When the President reached Maulana's residence at six in the morning, the body was being bathed for the coffin, Dr. Prasad was the first to offer his floral tribute to the departed leader. During the 40 minutes he was at the Maulana's residence, Dr. Prasad hardly uttered a word. Emotion overpowered him as he walked to the car to return to Rashtrapati Bhavan and he said, "This is the end of 38 years' close association and friendship." Dr. Prasad burst into tears and had to be conducted to his car by his A.D.C. and others present there. The President again visited Maulana's residence before the funeral procession started and placed a wreath on the body.

Prime Minister Nehru, who was standing by the side of the bier, was in tears and seen wiping tears often with his handkerchief.

The bier on which the body was placed, was draped with the Congress tri-colour and flowers. Maulana's face looked serene and restful in his eternal sleep. Standing opposite to the body, which was visible above masses of floral offerings, was the Prime Minister, with a grave, drawn, grief-stricken face as thousands filed past. Two or three women in *burqa* were so overcome that they sank to the ground and were helped to their feet and attended to.

Grief-stricken Pandit Nehru managed to say a few words of comfort to Dr. Syed Mahmud, who completely broke down and was about to faint when Shri Nehru wiping his own tears put his arms round the shoulders of the Bihar leader. Shri Nehru and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad then led Dr. Mahmud to a waiting car.

After the body had been placed in a coffin draped in a tri-colour, the bier was carried on shoulders from the porch to the road, where it was placed on a gun-carrier decorated with flowers. Swelling crowds at one stage made it difficult for the pall-bearers to advance and it was only after repeated appeals by the Prime Minister and other leaders that the crowds gave way.

The State funeral of the late Maulana Azad started from his residence at 1 P.M. on the 22nd February. The body was placed on a gun-carrier draped with National Flag. It was escorted by a military prove marshal jeep. Passing *via* India Gate, the procession turned towards the Hardinge Avenue and passed the Faiz Bazar, Darya Ganj and from there passing by the Edward's Park, it turned left towards Jama Masjid and then to the burial ground. The procession started after the bier was placed on the carriage. Shri Nehru stood in the carriage in front of the coffin. Seated in the carriage were the Congress President, Shri U.N. Dhebar, the Defence Minister, Mr. V.K. Krishna Menon, the Minister for Civil Aviation, Mr. Humayun Kabir, the Deputy Railway Minister, Mr. Shah Nawaz Khan, Maulana Hifzur Rahman, M.P., the Kashmir Premier, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Immediately following the cortege were the President and the Vice-President in their cars. Behind came Central Ministers, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Members of Parliament, Chief Ministers of Madras, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, the Governor of Orissa and members of the Diplomatic Corps. Diplomats from the Middle-Eastern countries were seen moved to tears as the cortege moved away. As the procession wended its way along a four-mile route lined by tens of thousands of people to the burial ground near the Jama Masjid, the Holy Quran was recited and cries of "Allah-o-Akbar" and "Maulana Azad Zindabad" were raised. Chief mourners were a nephew to Maulana Azad, Mr. Nuruddin, his sister-in-law and another close relation, Mr. Tahir.

The procession took an hour and a half to reach the burial ground with thousands upon thousands of mourners lining the four mile route. About half a million people had assembled at the ground with large numbers packed into the terraces of the Jama Masjid and balconies of nearby buildings. The police cordons at some distance from the grave were repeatedly rushed by surging crowds. Maulana Ahmad Saeed, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema leader, led the "Namaz-i-Janaza" (funeral prayer). As the prayer came to an end with the words, "As-Salam-ali-Kum" (farewell), the bier was taken to the grave, around which the leaders and diplomats were seated.

As the body was lowered, army buglers sounded the last post

and guardsmen fired three volleys into the air. A few moments later, the buglers played the "rouse". The crowds had by now become almost unmanageable and the commotion drowned the funeral march played by the Rajputana Rifles Regimental band. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri Nehru and other leaders sprinkled rose water from silver containers on the Maulana's body. Shri Nehru's care-worn face was bathed in tears. Many others too broke down as Maulana Ahmed Saeed turned the first sod. A hush fell down the vast gathering as loving hands took turns in filling the grave of the departed leader.

Over 1200 officers and men of the Infantry Air Force and the Navy lined up to route with reversed arms. There was a front escort of 50 service men carrying their regimental colours. The firing party comprising one Non-Commissioned Officer and 12 men was next followed by a Service band with bugles and drummers. The cortege was next in procession. Behind the cortege were the pall-bearers representing the three services and the bearer party followed by the Chief mourners and the V.I.Ps. Other mourners followed next and at the end was the rear escort. After the body was placed by the side of the grave and the prayers offered, the firing party fired three volleys. As the body was lowered into the grave the 'rouse' was sounded. Thereafter all present offered their homage.

He was laid to rest at ten minutes past three on the afternoon on 22nd February. About half a million people had assembled at the burial ground at the Jama Masjid, were precisely a week earlier, he had addressed a vast concourse of people on the occasion of the inaugural ceremony of the All-India Urdu Conference and where he delivered the last public speech of his life. The present writer was fortunate to be present there on that occasion. Full military honours were given to the great savant who was the seniormost member of the Cabinet. Prime Minister Pandit Nehru's careworn face was bathed in tears. Many others also broke down as Maulana Ahmed Saeed turned the first sod.

The Government of India in a black-bordered Gazette Extra-ordinary said, "The Government of India announce with the most profound regret the death of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Union Minister for Education and Scientific Research at New Delhi at 2-15 A.M. on February 22." In a communication addressed to State Governors and Secretaries of States and the Union

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ABUL KALAM AZAD : THE PATRIOT, SCHOLAR AND STATESMAN

VERINDER GROVER*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad belonged to a family of religious divines of Delhi. His ancestors migrated to Mecca during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and Mohiyuddin Ahmad popularly known as Abul Kalam Azad was born there in 1888. He had his preliminary education in Arabia and later came back with his parents to Calcutta in 1896.

Still in his teens, Mohiyuddin using the pseudonym Abul Kalam Azad acquired a high reputation for his writing on religion and literature in the Urdu journals of repute.

At about the age of twenty-two Azad's political ideas were in the formative stage. He wanted to see his country free from the British rule. But he heither approved the Congress Movement nor the Muslim League as the former was too slow and the latter had no well-set principles and its goal was unpredictable. Thus, he associated himself with the revolutionaries of Bengal.

Maulana Azad started his career as a religious leader. His earlier career (1906-20) was governed by religious teachings. His nationalism was uncompromisingly Islamic implying non-co-operation with non-Muslims including the British. However, he did not like the policies of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in preventing

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the Muslim from political activities and consistently following a pro-British course. He, therefore, decided to abandon the pro-British strategy of Sir Syed and started advocating that the Muslims should participate in the political life of the country.

The year 1920 brought a change in the views of Maulana Azad and he ceased to be a Muslim nationalist, and embraced Indian Nationalism and accepted secular and territorial national philosophy. He met Mahatma Gandhi on 18 January 1920 and plunged into the *Khilafat* and Non-Co-operation Movements. Maulana Azad now came into the field with his vast learning, his matchless powers of eloquence and persuasion and his modern outlook. More than any other Muslim leader, though he was the youngest of them all, he was a tower of strength to Gandhi.

Maulana Azad attached great importance to communal harmony. He believed that inspite of religious, racial and other differences, India was one nation. The composite nationalism for Azad was not an idea based on temporary agreement as some of the Ulema believed. In fact, his aim was the establishment of an indivisible and permanent nation, comprising of all Indians irrespective of caste, creed or relition. Thus Azad dreamt of and worked for a composite nationalism with complete harmony among all sections of the people, while retaining their individuality. Maulana Azad was essentially a religious man by conviction he was rational and modern. His rational and logical thinking made him believe that the root of all the religions is one. Different religions of the world differ not in the principal thing, i.e., eternal truth, but they differ in the rules of conduct, ways of worship etc. Thus differences was natural, because the object of the religion is well-being of mankind and as the conditions of mankind change with time and country, every religion is different in its outward manifestation. Thus, according to Maulana Azad, there is unity of religion in the unity of God and the unity of brotherhood. He was deeply committed to the composite culture of India, when he opined :

> Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years, Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years. Just as a Hindu can say with pride that he is an Indian and follows Hinduism, so also a

> Muslim can say with equal pride that he is an Indian and follows Islam.*

Azad's idea of universal humanism was the result of evolution. Till 20's Azad believed in Pan-Islamism but later the idea of multi-religious Indian nationhood superseded that idea and it finally grew into universal humanism of his mature thought.

Maulana Azad rejected the two-nation theory which was put forward by the leaders of the Muslim League to justify their demand for partition of India. He based his conception of nationalism on the community of territory, history and culture of the people. He believed that nationalism was one of the highest stages in the development of human relations and collective feelings.

Maulana Azad was a votary of liberty. When he was arrested in December 1921 for making a seditious speech in Calcutta and put on trial, in his defence he said :

> I firmly believe that liberty is the birth-right of every nation and each individual and that no man or man-made bureaucracy has the right to keep God's creatures in bondage— Consequently I refuse to acknowledge the present Government as the rightful one and deem it my national, my religious and my human duty to liberate my country and my people from its servitude.

After the sweeping victory of the Congress in 1937 elections, Maulana Azad was in favour of Congress forming ministries in the provinces, so that the powers given to the provincial governments be exercised to the full; later he became a member of the Congress Parliamentary Board which supervised the work of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress at the end of 1939 and continued as such till 1946.

Maulana Azad represented the Congress in the Shimla Conference held to discuss transfer of power in June, 1945 and played a leading part in the negotiations with the Cabinet Mission in 1946. Later he joined the Interim Government as Education

*Presidential Address at the Ramgarh Congress in March, 1940.

Minister on 15 January, 1947 and continued till his death on 22 February, 1958.

He served as a Member of the Constituent Assembly (1948-50) and the Provisional Parliament (1950-52). He was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1952 and re-elected in 1957.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a multi-faceted personality. He was at the same time a poet, an orator, a writer, an organiser, a patriot, a scholar and a statesman. On Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's death Jawaharlal Nehru while paying tribute to him said, "We mourn today the passing of a great man of luminous intelligence and a mighty intellect with an amazing capacity to pierce through a problem to its core."

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